

# THE GRAMOPHONE

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## THE NEW VOLUME

By THE EDITOR

WE enter our third year at a season when the vitality of the gramophone is popularly supposed to be at its lowest ebb. In spite of that the atmosphere buzzes pleasantly with whispers of coming excitements. His Master's Voice announce a new method of recording electrically. This morning I received an invitation from the Vocalion Company to dine at Princes at the end of May and witness some unique developments in the gramophone. Unfortunately I received by the same post a letter from my publishers inquiring anxiously about the health of my next book. Filled with a sense of something remarkably like guilt, I forced myself to decline the invitation, remembering that on July 9th we have our first Gramophone Congress. This, like most of the schemes which I start and leave the London office to get on with, is something of an experiment, but thanks to the support of the trade it looks like being a big success. If the Public led in by our readers responds as nobly, it *will* be a big success. Next year and every year afterwards we hope to make this Congress a three-day affair, and to hold it in various great cities of the kingdom in turn. Much depends, therefore, on our ability to demonstrate to the Press, to the Trade, and to the unconverted Public the need for such a Congress. So please rally round and make the affair an unqualified success. You will read elsewhere the

particulars. This is a personal appeal to our readers to stand by.

Now with regard to our Circulation Competition. This does not mean, as some of our good friends have feared, that we are in parlous straits. I am very glad and very thankful to be able to say that our circulation rises steadily every month, both at home and overseas; but a paper like this, which stands alone without the support of other publications, must stand all the more firmly on its own feet in consequence. It cannot have capital lavished upon it, because a specialist's paper cannot obtain an unlimited circulation. It is because we feel that we have not yet nearly reached that possible circulation that we are making this strenuous effort. For instance, not a single copy of THE GRAMOPHONE is sold in the city of Norwich from the London office. (I am not talking of copies sold by the big distributing agents like W. H. Smith.) Not one is sent by us to Lichfield, Durham, Worcester, Exeter, Chester or Gloucester. In fact, episcopal sees are apparently all anti-gramophonic, with notable exceptions like Canterbury, and, of course, great cities like Liverpool and Manchester. I wish we could convert a few ecclesiastical dignitaries. I have not much hope from bishops, because bishops are naturally fidgety people and also very much overworked. But deans are not



overworked, and they are rarely fidgety. Can none of our readers convert a dean? Dr. Inge would benefit enormously from a steady course of Haydn and Mozart. He should be tried with a fibre needle and an exceptionally mellow and romantic sound-box. Judges, too, might be angled for. I should have made an attempt to convert Sir Henry McCardie the other night when we were fellow-guests of the Whitefriars Club, because, in proposing "the Ladies," he emphasised the fact that he was himself a bachelor. So one of the great objections to owning a gramophone did not exist in his case. Unluckily I let the occasion slip. This brings me to an awkward topic, which is the indifference, nay, the positive hostility, of the fair sex to gramophones. I suppose I have received some two or three thousand letters about my books, of which at least half have come from women. I should not care to guess how many letters we have received about the gramophone; but not one in twenty comes from a woman. We have only one feminine contributor to this paper, and that is my own wife writing as "F Sharp."

To return to our circulation. I had been wondering what prize I could add to the list, and thinking of the progress our paper has made in two years, I took out of an album the four records of the Schumann Pianoforte Quintet which were the first I played on my Vocalion instrument and which may thus be called the begetters of THE GRAMOPHONE. They have been played many, many times, these four records. They have been subjected to every kind of needle and all the horrors of bad alignment. Yet at this moment they are very nearly as brilliant as they were in March, 1922. I asked the Vocalion Company to send me new records of the quintet. They are now published on two double-sided discs at little more than half of the price of what a single movement cost when I bought them. My request was, like all my gramophonic requests, most courteously granted, and I have played the original records for the last time. The first movement will be sent to the London office to be framed. The second movement I propose to offer to the Vocalion Company as a curio, if they care to accept it. The third movement I offer to the reader who wins the circulation competition. The fourth movement I offer to the winning dealer. I will stick on the back a very brief history in my own hand and sign it. The gift has no monetary value, but so much of my heart has been, and is, and always will be in this paper of ours, that I cannot give anything that I cherish more dearly than these four records.

I feel I ought to propitiate the users of fibre needles whose tenderest feelings I wounded last month by my remarks. I am not as penitent as I ought to be, because any remarks of mine that can evoke such an admirable expression of opinion

as will be found in Mr. Davis's article were worth making. After all, one of my main objects as editor is to stimulate you into self-expression for the benefit of us all. I have never suggested that the users of fibre were not as a class probably the most intelligent gramophiles that exist; but they have of late evinced a decided tendency to become hieratic. There was an atmosphere of phylacteries that was fast tending toward Pharisaicism. In fact they were having it all their own way. Steel needles were getting talked about as a War Office mandarin might talk of neolithic arrow-heads. On top of that came these long-distance championships, and I was beginning to wonder whether we were investigating music or hurdle-racing. I am perfectly willing to allow that for everything except orchestras the average gramophonist is better off with fibres. But Wagner and Strauss on fibre? No! And we have got to have every kind of music on the gramophone. And do steel needles, given a good alignment, ruin records very quickly? I doubt it. A Tungstyle needle does not damage a record until it buckles, but as it is impossible to know when a Tungstyle will buckle they should be placed definitely on the black list. The Sympathetic Chromic type of needle and the soft-toned needles are equally dangerous. My own opinion is that the Petmecky beats the lot all round, with the Trum-peter for orchestras on a suitable machine. Loud Chromics are now (again my own personal opinion, and not perhaps anyone else's) utterly unreliable and can scarcely be used once with security. Avoid *all* soft-metal needles. They are a snare and a delusion, and it has cost me many records to achieve that positive opinion. The struggle, in my judgment, at present lies between the Fibre and the Petmecky.

Now, about that happy combination of which I wrote last month. This is how matters stand at present. I am getting at Jethou, with the help of an apparently simple gadget, on my Balmain instrument far better results than I have ever dreamed of getting from a gramophone; but my helpers and myself cannot yet obtain equal results anywhere else. We are working hard to see if we can not only get them ourselves but guarantee them to others. As soon as possible I shall publish an account of our struggles. The gadget itself is no novelty, although I cannot believe that its potential importance has ever been fully realised. What I want to make perfectly clear, however, is that nobody need have the least hesitation about buying any existing gramophone, because, if the principle is as sound as I think, it can be applied to any gramophone at a merely nominal cost. It is not a new sound-box. It is not a new amplifier. It is not a new tone-arm. It will render obsolete nothing that is at present on the market.

COMPTON MACKENZIE.



# THE GRAMOPHONE AND THE SINGER

(Continued)

By HERMAN KLEIN

## The Royal Opera Season

ONCE more, for all too brief a space, does the Spirit of Grand Opera rule over an active working establishment within the honoured walls of Covent Garden. It resumed its neglected duties, for the benefit of a long-starving aristocracy, on May 18th, a date which unfortunately fell too late for any notice of the actual performances to appear in the present issue of this magazine. But, whilst postponing criticism until our next number, there is no reason why something should not be said beforehand concerning published records of certain of the less familiar operas that are down for revival—no real novelties whatsoever being underlined for production.

First of all, though, a word about the enterprise itself. It has been launched by a body called the London Opera Syndicate, whereof Lieut.-Col. Eustace Blois is the managing director, Mr. Percy Pitt the musical director, and Mr. Charles Moor the *régisiseur*, with the customary personnel of the older syndicate working in the background. I need scarcely say that Covent Garden in the middle of the London season remains, despite its vegetable and floral surroundings, the ideal house for what we now term "international" operatic undertakings of this brilliant but evanescent type. Neither in shape nor holding capacity does it resemble the kind of national opera-house that is being projected, for instance, by Mr. Isidore de Lara. The auditorium of the latter would not be designed for showing off dresses and tiaras, or for society celebrities to meet and stare at each other. In that respect the two places would be so unlike in purpose that if both were standing in the same parish there would be no real reason for their clashing. Still, if opera at cheap prices cannot possibly be made to pay at Covent Garden, it is so eminently suited for high-class expensive opera that one is extremely glad to see it occupied for this purpose, if only for a couple of months, at the present time of year. *Dum vivimus, vivamus*, and, so long as it stands, the old house in Bow Street has every claim to be recognised and utilised as the legitimate home of grand opera (so-called) in the capital of the Empire.

In accordance with latter-day custom, the season started with a spell of German opera, omitting for

once, however, serial performances of *The Ring* in its entirety. There were good reasons for this, an especial one being the very short time for preparation that was found to be available. Hence, moreover, the frank confession made by Colonel Blois at the outset that in the planning of this season operas had been "fitted to artists rather than artists to operas." Under the circumstances the repertory announced in the prospectus was sufficiently interesting. Wagner and Strauss supplied the works for the German month; Verdi, Donizetti, Rossini, Puccini, Giordano, and possibly Ponchielli, the wherewithal for the Italian month that is still to come. The revival of *Der Fliegende Holländer* was particularly welcome after an absence of twelve years from the bill. It is one of my favourites, and all true Wagner-lovers listen to it with pleasure, not only for its own melodious sake, but because it embodies the first unfolding of the master's new ideas and style after he had begun to cut adrift from the conventions of Spontini, Weber and Meyerbeer, as manifested in his earliest big opera, *Rienzi*.

*The Flying Dutchman* was the first of Wagner's stage works to be produced in English by Carl Rosa, under whose own direction it was brought out at the Lyceum Theatre in October, 1876, with the unforgettable Santley as Vanderdecken. Curious is it to recall how strange and exotic the music sounded to our ears at that time—even, perhaps, to those who had already heard it in Italian at Drury Lane six years previously; though not, of course, to the privileged few (myself *not* among them) who had just been listening for the first time to the *Nibelungen* at the opening of the new Bayreuth Theatre. Another six years were to elapse before (1882) we were to hear Wagner's colossal tetralogy in this country at Her Majesty's Theatre, with a complete German company and some of the original cast, at which time, it must be admitted, we were barely ready for it. In the self-same season, too, we were granted at Drury Lane Theatre, under Hans Richter, the initial hearing in London, also in German, of *Tristan und Isolde*, which glorious music-drama, it is interesting to note, had its 100th performance at Covent Garden on the second night of the current season.



Of Strauss's brace of operas *Der Rosenkavalier*, with last year's cast, evoked a much brisker box-office sale than *Elektra*, and for the best of reasons. *Elektra* is a work to see once, for the satisfaction of sheer curiosity; and perhaps a second time, in order to confirm one's first impressions concerning its supremacy as an agglomeration of dramatic and musical horrors. I like it even less than *Salome*, and that is saying something. On the other hand, I have a considerable admiration for the *Rosenkavalier*, despite the pungent Viennese flavour of its libretto and the over-lengthy attenuation of interest of the story in the restaurant scene of the last act. But the latter you are compelled to sit out, because you would not on any account miss the superb trio which is one of the great musical moments of the opera—perhaps the greatest. Had he written naught else for the theatre, the reputation of Strauss as an operatic composer of distinction might rest with perfect security upon this achievement. Were it of equal merit all through, it would suffice to stamp him for posterity as the legitimate successor of Wagner. I believe Germany, or at least Austria, already looks upon him in that light. In the meantime the world in general regards with infinitely greater favour the operas of Giacomo Puccini.

And mention of Puccini brings me to a consideration of the Italian half of the season now in progress. Truly, as I have said, there is little here that is not familiar, save in the personality of the artists to whom it will be entrusted; and with them I must perforce deal later on. But the moment seems favourable for saying something about two operas that are down for revival, and which have not been heard at Covent Garden for eighteen years: I refer to Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* and *Fédora*. Both are exceedingly popular in Italy, where I suppose Umberto Giordano, since the death of Puccini, has been regarded as the greatest among native living composers. His gifts fairly entitle him to be so considered. Born at Foggia in 1867, he was educated at the Naples Conservatoire and competed for the Sonzogno prize which Mascagni gained with *Cavalleria Rusticana*. But if his one-act opera *Marina* did not win the prize, it was nevertheless much commended by the judges, and brought the commission for his opera, *Mala Vita*, produced at Rome in 1892. Four years later success came to Giordano in full measure with *Andrea Chénier*, which remains so far his masterpiece. Brought out at La Scala, Milan, in 1896, it was first given in England by the Carl Rosa company at Manchester in 1903, and at Covent Garden, in the original Italian, during the autumn of 1905, with Zenatello, Sammarco, and Febea Strakosch in the principal parts. It was also performed twice in the summer of 1907, but since then has not been repeated here. During the latter year I heard it

for the first time at the Manhattan Opera House, New York, and formed a favourable opinion of its merits.

The story of *Andrea Chénier* is founded by Luigi Illica upon incidents in the career of the talented young poet who flourished and faded during the tempestuous period of the French Revolution. The last three acts take place in Paris, but the scene of the first is laid at the castle of the Count of Coigny, where Maddalena, only daughter of a proud and wealthy house, comes under the poet's influence and they fall in love. The whirligig of the revolution reveals another admirer in the *ci-devant* lackey Gérard, who was once Chénier's friend, but is now his rival and enemy, being, moreover, a powerful official in the service of the Republic. Upon the situation thus brought about an interesting plot is constructed, and some highly dramatic scenes are contrived. The best of these are the lengthy episode of Chénier's trial before the revolutionary tribunal and the final interview which the repentant Gérard secures for the lovers in the prison before the poet is led out to execution. These scenes occupy the third and fourth acts respectively, and in both instances the music gradually grows in intensity until it rises to the fullest heights of passionate feeling. Great music it may not be; original in the true sense it is not either; but it bears the characteristic stamp of the modern Italian school—of Mascagni and Leoncavallo, perhaps, rather than Puccini—and beyond a question it is melodious, dramatic, picturesque, effectively written for the voice, boldly and cleverly scored for the orchestra.

Qualities of much the same order distinguish the score of *Fédora*, though, for reasons that must be attributed in part to the libretto of Arturo Colautti, it does not make quite so good an opera. Giordano has himself described how he came to choose the subject of Sardou's play. He had, when a student in Paris, seen Sarah Bernhardt in it (as did the present writer on the first night it was performed), and was so fascinated both by the play and the great actress that he begged Sardou to grant him permission to make an opera of it. This was duly accorded, but Giordano admitted that he found difficulty in getting his librettist and converting *Fédora* into a first-rate operatic story. However, when it was given in Paris in 1905—one year before it was produced at Covent Garden with Giachetti and Zenatello—Sardou was present. He liked the opera so much that he invited Giordano to his villa and forthwith offered to write a new "book" expressly for him; which he did, calling it *La Fête du Nil*, and dealing with Napoleon in Egypt, the scenes being laid in and near Cairo. Only, there was to be no music for Napoleon, who was seen but once in the second act, near the Pyramids, at nightfall. Giordano, when



in London in 1906, said that he hoped to complete this opera for production in Paris in the following year, but I cannot discover that it has ever been produced anywhere. He also hoped that his *Siberia* would be done here. It still awaits that honour; but I saw the New York performance in 1907 and found it, I am bound to say, extremely dull.

When *Fédora* was first mounted in Italy at the Teatro Lirico, Milan, the two chief rôles were splendidly sung by Bellincioni and Caruso—the former the original Santuzza of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, in which part and also in *Carmen* I heard her at Covent Garden in 1895. Caruso must have been a magnificent Loris Ipanoff; while probably the most attractive *Fédora* of past days was Lina Cavalieri, who invested both the character and the music with an infinite degree of charm. The setting of Sardou's story is fairly forceful and coherent, seeing what a quantity of dialogue of a conversational sort is contained in it; but on the whole the strength of the plot and the dramatic intensity of much of the music save it from dullness. The former is too familiar to call for narration here. Other famous actresses besides Sarah Bernhardt helped to make *Fédora* a famous character; for it contains tremendous opportunities, and the situation alike in the play and the opera are among the most effective that the resourceful Sardou ever invented. A well-known London critic once remarked concerning Giordano's work, "You cannot go to sleep when listening to *Fédora*." And if you understand what the story is about you need certainly find no difficulty in keeping awake.

The majority of the records from *Andrea Chénier* at my disposal are by the H.M.V., and the dramatic incidents which they illustrate are briefly set forth in the admirably-arranged manual published by that firm under the title of *Opera at Home*. (A cheap and useful volume that ought to be in the possession of every gramophone-lover.) They must be described as excerpts rather than "numbers," for there are no set lyrics in *Andrea Chénier*; the action is continuous, and only interrupted by the fall of the curtain at the end of each *quadro* or *tableau*. In point of fact, it is as essentially a music-drama as if it were by Wagner or one of his many imitators. Giordano pays little heed to questions of "form"; he is content to ignore all the old-fashioned rules and conventions of operatic writing. He takes a phrase as it comes; sets it to music for what it is worth; expresses its meaning in a passage that exactly fits it, after the rich, rare, and racy modern Italian style; then passes on to the next one. But it is all very effective; for there is abundant colour and variety in the vocal treatment, in the alternation of melodic charm with declamatory vigour, in the accompanying flow of orchestral device. In short, it is the kind of thing—highly individualised, of course, for Giordano has an

unmistakable hall-mark of his own—that Italian opera of to-day has gradually developed through the successive stages indicated by the works of Ponchielli, Mascagni, and Puccini. Only these we know a great deal better than we know Giordano.

The gifted baritone, Titta Ruffo, has made a splendid record of the soliloquy, *Son sessant' anni* (H.M.V. D.A.351), sung by the discontented lackey, Gérard, almost at the opening of the opera. It embodies his angry reflections as he watches his old father toiling with his broom in the winter garden of the Coigny castle. Needless to say how Titta Ruffo makes the most of such an opportunity as this, declaiming every phrase with broad vowel tones and unrestrained ardour of expression, emphasizing the value of every consonant and the weight of every syllable. Later in the same scene comes the well-known "improvisation" of Andrea Chénier, beginning *Un di all'azzurro spazio*, of which I find three excellent examples. It demands a plentiful supply of powerful sustained tone throughout; and of this there is no lack in the modern operatic tenor. Ulysses Lappas (Col. L1514) may be a Greek by birth, but he is undeniably Italian by adoption, and therefore does not spare himself here. At the same time he is very intelligent, his sharp contrasts are very striking, his delivery and diction well controlled. The recording, too, is extremely good. In Beniamino Gigli (H.M.V. D.B.670) the same typical qualities emerge, but the rendering differs at certain points. I admire particularly the imposing crescendo where the poet depicts the sun flooding with golden light "il firmamento," and leading to the outburst which exasperates the assembled "aristocrats" whilst kindling love in the heart of Madalena. More resonant than either of these is the rendering by Bernardo de' Muro (H.M.V. D.B.553), whose voice and style remind me not a little of Tamagno—penetrating, passionate, and powerful, yet occasionally quite subdued and tender in feeling.

From *Tableau II.* there is nothing; but from the third there are three, beginning with what is, I believe, the most famous passage in the opera, viz., the *Nemico della patria*?—wherein Gérard signs the lying document that ultimately sends the poet to the guillotine. Declaimed by Titta Ruffo (H.M.V. D.B.242) in his finest manner, this is from every point of view a magnificent record. The second is Elisabeth Rethberg's *La Mamma morta* (Bruns. 50054A), from the tremendous scene where Maddalena confronts Gérard and promises him anything, everything, if he will only save Andrea. In this a well-executed record reveals a fine voice of true dramatic soprano timbre, clear, pure, and pathetic, save only at moments when over-pressure makes it a trifle hard and unsteady. The change of the closing G to an octave higher than it is in the score is fully justified by the effect. The third is Chénier's



appeal to the tribunal, *Si, fui soldato*, by Bernardo de' Muro, which fills the reverse side of the record by that artist noticed above. It is an equally telling bit of declamation and ends on a notably fine phrase—"You would kill me? Be it so. But do not deprive me of my honour."

In the concluding tableau we have a beautiful version by Enrico Caruso of the poet's touching monologue, *Come un bel dì di Maggio* (H.M.V. D.A.117), the last poem that his pen is to indite as he awaits death in his prison cell. Here in a faultless record is to be found the same wonderful tone of old; dark, strong, manly, pathetic in a singular degree, yet not marred by over-many sobs. It is an effort worthy of the great tenor, and the high B flat inserted between the two G flats in the last bar but one seems to be a customary effect, doubtless introduced with the composer's consent. The same thing is done by Ulysses Lappas (Col. L1514) in his exceedingly dramatic rendering of this piece, which some readers may be glad to possess in addition to the Caruso. It is well worth hearing. The final duet, *Vedi? la luce incerta del crepuscolo* (Parlo. E10122), is an outburst of ecstatic passion for the hero and heroine just before they are led out to execution. It is sung by A. Cortis and Z. Fumagalli with any amount of strenuous energy; and with it the opera comes to an end.

The yield from *Fédora* is ridiculously small for a long opera in three acts. The reason, however, is explained by the fragmentary nature of the musical setting, due to the conversational method employed by the librettist. The sole approach to an air is the passage wherein Loris Ipanoff declares that *Fédora's* awakening love for him will assert its sway in spite of her efforts to extinguish the flame. The title, *Amor ti vieta di non amar*, appears on records by three singers, namely, A. Bonci (Col. D8086), B. Gigli (H.M.V. DA225), and Ed. Johnson (H.M.V. D.A.166), and on the whole there is not much to choose between them. Gigli has a fine organ and sustains the long-drawn phrases without a semblance of effort. His fault is that he carries to excess his imitation of the Caruso "sob," especially in the second excerpt from this opera, *Vedi, io piango*, which appears on the reverse side of D.A.225. For artistic restraint and contrast of colour, Bonci presents a preferable reading, to an orchestral accompaniment in which the harp is very prominent. This able singer is beginning to develop a slight tremolo, but his tone in the head notes is still extremely pure, and unforced. I cannot say the same for the Johnson record, which conveys without mitigation the maximum of energy and force.

HERMAN KLEIN.



## PERSONS AND PERSONALITIES

By SYDNEY GREW

### I.

ETHELBERT NEVIN.

ETHELBERT NEVIN is one of the minor composers in the way Ella Wheeler Wilcox is one of the minor poets, but, like Mrs. Wilcox, he was great in his order, giving a warm, refined, and simple pleasure to so many thousands of people that the word "minor" applies to him only by absolute comparison with the master-composers. His song, *The Rosary*, and his pianoforte piece, *Narcissus*, ran literally over the entire world, being heard wherever white folk live.

If he were alive to-day he would be sixty-three years old, but fate allotted him only thirty-nine years of life, and he died as far back as the year 1901. He was born in Pennsylvania, in 1862, and studied music variously in America and Europe up to 1886. Among his piano masters were von Bülow and Klindworth, the latter the famous

editor of Chopin. His master for singing was Franz Böhme, of Dresden, a collector of folk-songs, in which kind of song are always that uncalculated melody and natural harmony which form the foundation of the music of writers like Nevin.

From 1886 to 1892 he lived in Boston, and then for some years he wandered about Europe—Paris, Berlin, Florence, Venice, etc.—until his health broke down, and he returned to America to die.

Apart from a work for chorus and orchestra (of which the orchestration was made by Horatio Parker, another American, after Nevin's death) and the music for a pantomime play, Nevin wrote only songs and piano pieces; but several of his works are played in arrangement for violin and pianoforte, while *Narcissus* and *The Rosary* are arranged for performance by all kinds of concerted instruments.

We think of him mostly as a writer of music of charm and sentiment, yet he had other moods



and knew well enough how to be gay : sometimes, on the other hand, he is truly contemplative, striking the note generally called introspective—this is mainly in his love-music, and it evidences itself even in *The Rosary*, if only we can divest ourselves of the impressions fixed by its awful popularity.

*Narcissus* unhappily got spoiled for middle-aged music-lovers by that husky-voiced comedian, R. G. Knowles, of *Love, Marriage and Divorce* fame, who twenty-five years ago adapted the melody to the refrain of a song, so that whenever we elderly people hear *Narcissus* these words spring to the front of our consciousness again :

“ There they are, the pair of them on their own,  
In the parlour, aloney, alone, alone . ”

Our fox-trottists to-day mould many melodies into the rhythm of their form, but they do not so completely destroy the virtue of the original as the adapters of twenty-five years ago, whose further labours attached to Mendelssohn's *Spring Song* the ceaseless echo of

“ Put me upon an island where the girls are few ! ”

The melodic idea of *Narcissus* came to Nevin when he was extemporising on the piano. Without his being aware of the fact, he had an audience while confirming the idea and shaping it further at the instrument ; for the “ hired help ” who happened that morning to be at work in the house moved about very quietly so as to catch the sounds, and when after a time Nevin called her in to listen to the piece in the rough (for, like most creative artists, he always wanted to “ try out ” a thing the moment it had acquired a body) he found she could hum the tune and assure him that she guessed it was the loveliest piece she had ever heard.

The following are among the compositions of Ethelbert Nevin the gramophonist should seek out : the song, *Mighty lak' a rose* ; the piano pieces, *Love Song*, *Berceuse*, *Valse Rhapsody* (from Op. 2), *Dragon-Fly*, *Ophelia*, *Water-Nymph* (from Op. 13, the work which contains *Narcissus*), *Canzone Amorosa*, *Buona Notte*, *Gondoliers* (from Op. 25), and any of the dances for piano.

#### SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR.

Coleridge-Taylor had two years less of life even than Ethelbert Nevin, for he was but thirty-seven years old when he died in 1912. Yet his life seems lengthy to the student who takes the historical view, for he won fame early, was for all the following years a busy worker and much in the public eye, and his death was as conspicuous an event as that of any Englishman of our time, by which his music and his personality were still more firmly fixed in the general mind. In this respect, Coleridge-Taylor reminds one of some of the Elizabethan poets and dramatists.

Although a negro, and an apostle of the negroes who tried to express them in his art, he counts for an Englishman, and his music is an essential part of the new English music of the twentieth century. His poetical interests were typical of his time and country, the material he used being drawn from many poets and derived from many places.

Yet his African origin inspired him to work to negro ideas and texts all through his life : his Op. 12 is the *Southern Love Songs*, his Op. 17 is the songs called *African Romances*, his Op. 35 is the *African Suite* for orchestra, Op. 49 is some American lyrics, his Op. 51 is a concert march based on Whitman's wonderful poem, “ Ethiopia Saluting the Colours ” (of which, by the by, the most inspired musical treatment is Dr. Charles Wood's song setting, a piece that always touches one with awe), his Op. 58 is the set of African dances for violin and piano, his next opus is a set of twenty-four negro melodies, Op. 63 is a set of symphonic variations for orchestra, on an African tune, and so the list goes on. Even in his *Hiawatha*, produced when the composer was twenty-three years old, Coleridge-Taylor brings in negro music, for the overture is built up on the song, *Nobody knows the trouble I see, Lord !*

We are of late giving a good deal of attention to the “ spirituals ” of the American negroes ; by reaction, this phase of interest ought to lead us back to some of the above-named works of Coleridge-Taylor, only a few of which are of really wide repute.

Coleridge-Taylor wrote more than a hundred and fifty works, in about eighteen years. If he had lived, he might have been for negro music what Grieg was for Norwegian, Dvorák for Bohemian, and Falla for Spanish.

Yet perhaps he would have failed. He never repeated the astonishing success of the first part of the *Hiawatha* trilogy, and for the last ten years or so of his life he had to work constantly to find the money to keep his family—a responsibility that would have continued for another ten or fifteen years. One supremely successful opera or cantata provides an income. Charpentier lived on *Louise* for many years, and Puccini could have lived on the proceeds of *Madame Butterfly* alone. *The Holy City* was worth ten pounds a week to its composer, A. R. Gaul, for pretty well an entire generation ; and *Hiawatha* would probably have been worth quite half that sum to Coleridge-Taylor, had it been his property : but he sold it outright for a hundred pounds, being lucky in the moment, and unlucky in the end. His death, indeed, left his family destitute, and the musical world had to lend his widow and children a helping hand.

Coleridge-Taylor was a delightful speaker in public. He seemed to have no shyness. When responding to a vote of thanks or a testimonial of appreciation he would lean against a table or desk,



cross one leg in front of the other, and talk in that light, glib, friendly manner which is peculiar to the educated negro, laughing happily at his own jokes.

He wrote his music at a piano, working in the garden in warm weather, and in a wooden shed-like place when it was cold.

When we become advanced in our musical tastes we find that he had little real energy or power of rhythm, which is the life of music; but we never cease to like the fine barbaric splendour with which he expresses the ideas that exactly agree with his nature. He was no reflective philosopher in art, but a clever child of nature who never troubled about matters that would have puzzled him had he given them thought.

#### CÉSAR FRANCK.

César Franck, according to our individual point of view, is a great master or a bore: he is one of the line that runs from Bach, through Beethoven, into Brahms, or he is a modernist, the founder of a new kind of music: and he is either French or German.

Franck, therefore, is a problem for amateur music-lovers who like to think about what gives them pleasure. By birth he was a Belgian who lived and worked in Paris. By character of musical genius he is one who links up the pre-Beethoven-Bach school with the great classic school of the latter half of the nineteenth century, learning all there is to know of symphonic forms from Beethoven, of reflective harmonies from Schumann, and of flowing melody from Chopin. By direct influence as composer and teacher he is the founder of a modern school of music which exists in France: Vincent d'Indy, Guy Ropartz, and Ysaye being chief among his disciples: but this school is quite distinct from the school which contains Debussy, Ravel, and the younger Frenchmen; and as these are the true "modernists," it follows that Franck is not the founder of a new line at all, but the continuer of the solid classical line.

His music is boring only to those of us who, having fairly advanced tastes, happen to care for the smaller, comparatively emotionless music of the real moderns more than we care for the large and intensely mooded music of the real classics.

Speaking broadly, César Franck is one of those in whom religion persists as the cause and justification of art. A devout Catholic, he naturally wrote definitely religious works, as the *Rebecca Idyll* for solo, chorus, and orchestra (1881), the *Ruth*, a biblical eclogue (1846), the *Redemption*, a symphonic poem for voices and orchestra (1872), the great oratorio of *The Beatitudes* (1870-1880), and a mass, some psalms, hymns, motets, etc.

But beyond this, he was a philosopher of that grave and noble cast in whom philosophy is an entirely humanistic religion; and it is here that he

becomes one of the greatest and most vital of the masters of music.

A broad and general understanding of humanity, with its fears, hopes, needs, aspirations, and ceaseless problems, invariably drives a creative artist into the more lengthy forms of art, which is why musicians like Beethoven and Wagner work best in the large forms and indeed work badly in the smaller ones. The subject is so vast, and there is so much to consider, that they simply cannot move in a restricted field. And being optimistic philosophers, that is philosophers who solve the problems of humanity and see the eventual good of things, they invariably arrive at power and beauty, so that in the end their music is all loveliness and strength.

Loveliness and strength, then, with that impassioned gravity and serene content which attend only on them, are the qualities of César Franck's music; and if such music rather challenges us, it is only in the nature of things that it should do so.

Few thorough-going music-lovers, however, fail to accept the challenge, and still fewer are overthrown. Consequently among the most permanently popular music in the world are Franck's symphony in D minor (1889), his violin sonata (1886), his pianoforte quintet (1880), his string quintet (1889) and his symphonic variations for piano and orchestra (1885). These works flow with sheer melody; in the middle movement of the symphony is one of the longest melodies ever written (it is heard first in the cor anglais), and the opening of the sonata contains one of those tunes that we whistle and hum for days after we have first heard them.

Less attractive, because more intellectual, yet equally moving when we know them well, are works like the *Prelude, Choral, and Fugue* and the *Prelude, Aria, and Finale* for piano solo.

Franck wrote a dozen or more songs, and in his earlier years he wrote a good deal of miscellaneous music in the lighter manner of his time; these are gradually coming into the gramophone records, and when they are well performed they prove to be delightful.

Living when Gounod filled the world of French music, Franck counted for little in his lifetime. He was not a public character; teaching all day, he had to write his music in the early morning or late evening, and the academicians of Paris did not take him seriously—or, rather, they took him so seriously that they were jealous of him and refused him recognition. He gradually made good, however, and when in 1890 he died, aged sixty-eight, some important musicians attended his funeral: official musicians kept away, however, and there was no public ceremony.

(To be continued.)



# THE GRAMOPHONE CONGRESS

*Thursday, July 9th*

**P**LEASE impress that date upon your memory. It is the date of the Gramophone Congress at the CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER (three minutes' walk from Whitehall, Victoria Street, the Abbey, St. James Park Station, and Westminster Bridge Station). Urged by readers, who think that no trouble is too great (for *us* to take) in the good cause, we have assumed this grandiose name for a small beginning—as we did with the National Gramophonic Society. But this is vision!

The Congress will be opened at 11 a.m. by Sir Richard Terry, who has very kindly consented to act as president for this year. It will close at 10 p.m. There will be stalls at which practically every well-known make of gramophone, record and accessory will be represented. At least, we hope so. The manufacturer who neglects the opportunity will probably regret it afterwards. But at the moment of going to press the response of the trade to the scheme has been as cordial as it is to all our suggestions; and among those firms who have taken stands may be mentioned the following:—

The Vocalion Co., Ltd.  
The Orchorsol Gramophone Co.  
Peter Pan Gramophone Co., Ltd.  
The Gramophone Exchange.  
Goodwin and Tabb (1924), Ltd.  
Boumphrey, Arundel and Co., Ltd.  
Murdoch, Murdoch and Co.  
\* The Parlophone Co., Ltd.  
Craies and Stavridi.  
E. M. Ginn.

"Decca." (Messrs. Barnett Samuel and Co.)

In the adjoining Conference Hall there will be demonstrations of different makes of gramophone throughout the day. Refreshments will be obtainable in the main hall.

This Congress will be nothing more or less than a one-day trade show for the gramophone public and a rendezvous for our readers. Entrance tickets will cost 1s. (including tax) and can be obtained either direct from THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Frith Street, London, W. 1, or from any of the usual ticket agents, or from your local dealer. Or you can pay at the door.

*But the first five hundred applicants* who buy their entrance tickets for the Congress from the London Office (cutting out the Coupon on p. xxv, sending a remittance and a stamped and addressed envelope) *will also receive an invitation to the Caxton Hall, Westminster* (three minutes' walk from the Central Hall) where from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. will be held

GRAMOPHONE TESTS.

Is that quite clear? The Gramophone Tests are a totally separate affair from the Gramophone Congress, held in the evening of the same day in a different building; but we hope that those enthusiasts who rallied to the Steinway Hall last June will make a day of it this year on July 9th, and come to both shows.

*Only they must write to us immediately after reading this page and qualify for an invitation to the Caxton Hall. The coupon must be cut out of p. xxv and enclosed with the application.*

Further particulars both of the Congress and of the tests will appear in the July number. It is enough at this juncture to say that we shall do our best to make both of them extremely interesting; and since the trade is heartily co-operating with us, we have no doubt that our readers will do their share in making the venture a success by flocking to the Central Hall on July 9th.

WRITE AT ONCE FOR YOUR TICKET.

\* \* \*

*Notice.*—We have written to most of those firms who are likely to take part in the Congress or the tests; but if this is read by any individual or any firm to whom an invitation has not been sent, and who is anxious to take part in either, we shall be glad to hear from him (or it) at once.

Although every maker of gramophones is invited to compete in the tests at the Caxton Hall, the Editor must reserve the right to close the list as soon as the programme threatens to become unwieldy. There is only a limited accommodation both for competitors and for audience at the Caxton Hall.

\* \* \*

*The Gramophone : Its Past : Its Present : Its Future :*

**S**O much attention has been drawn in the press to the Editor's paper (with this title) read to the Musical Association on April 21st—Mr. W. W. Cobbett being in the chair—that it is advisable to state publicly that Mr. Compton Mackenzie had no warning or premonition of the fact that reporters would be present, or he would have modified a good many of his remarks. He had imagined himself talking almost privately to a number of important people in the musical world, and his chief object in what he said was to stir them to a proper recognition of the gramophone—and even to remorse for their previous neglect of it—as being "worthy of serious attention." What one may justifiably say to a body of educated people by way of emphasising a point with a sharp phrase of criticism, or of lightening a heavy period with a fluff of wit will seem oddly distorted when snatched from its context by a journalist and retailed unintelligently to the world at large.



# VINCENZO BELLINI

Catania 1801—1835 Puteaux

By F SHARP

IN the year 1845 the Czar Nicholas I brought his consort, Alexandra Feodorovna, to Sicily for the benefit of her health, accompanied by their daughter, the Grand Duchess Olga, and a numerous suite. They stayed in the beautiful Villa Olivuzzi, near Palermo, for a year. To commemorate this notable visit Palermo produced a finely-printed book with several engravings—among them portraits of the illustrious visitors with such remarkable waists. A series of short articles on appropriate subjects is followed by a flood of rapturous poetry, terminating in a riot of florid music—*La Saluta Recuperata* (*Health regained*), *Olga Waltz for Military Band*—music overwhelming even to contemplate in perfect copperplate engraving. In the midst of all this, as though it had flown in and been imprisoned by mistake, is *La Farfalletta* (*The Butterfly*), unpublished music composed at the age of twelve years by Maestro Cavaliere Vincenzo Bellini. This touching little song, which is reproduced on another page, was composed by “ce blond enfant de Sicile” for his marionette theatre. He, of course, had nothing to do with the Royal visit, as he had died ten years earlier, but it was natural that no *ricordo* would be complete without something of his—whose fame was the glory of his native island.

The juxtaposition of this melody and its exuberant companions seems very aptly to typify Bellini himself, not only in his music, but in his relations with the rest of the world. The simplicity of his character was matched by the music that poured from his very soul. He was one of those rare people born with a charm that is almost beyond human charm, with something unearthly about it—of an angelic beauty of countenance, inspiring a devotion almost fanatical, steadfast in friendship, and wholly unreliable in what are called affairs of the heart. Fresh and sweet were his melodies, innocent in the earlier days of any attempt at orchestration beyond a mere accompaniment to the voice. Cherubini said “il n'en eût pu placer une autre sous ses melodies.” Such delicate webs might be too easily broken. There is a difference of opinion among biographers as to whether he was really ignorant of the theory of music and counterpoint, or was indifferent to it. He certainly said: “What do I care about counterpoint? All I want to do is to enchant the ears and move the hearts of people.” But this does not prove anything. It

seems, however, unlikely that he can have passed through the Conservatorio di San Sabastiano at Naples, under the tutelage of Zingarelli, without picking up more than the rudiments of harmony and counterpoint. Certainly his musical education began early as a matter of course, music being his father's and his grandfather's profession. Vincenzo's gifts proclaimed themselves at an early age—he is said to have sung his own tunes at eighteen months—and in 1819 he entered the Conservatorio with a scholarship, thanks a good deal to the influence of the Duchess of Sammartino. All through his life Bellini was to bask in the favours of the “best people” without losing that shapely blonde head of his.

It was the custom of the Conservatorio to give the students the words of a cantata to set to music, the best of which was performed at San Carlo in the presence of the Royal family. Bellini's version was the best, and “even the King applauded it.” Barbaja, the famous impresario, at once commissioned an opera for San Carlo. At this time Bellini was deeply in love with Maddelena Fumaroli, whom he had first seen through a spy-glass on a distant balcony. She was the daughter of a Neapolitan gentleman, who did not favour the suit of a penniless young musician. Maddelena was passionately attached, and the cruel obduracy of her parents drove her to poetry, of which the most notable composition was *Dolente Immagine di Fille Mia*, which Bellini set to music. This made a great sensation among the most elegant people.

Bellini seized the opportunity of the San Carlo offer to fly from the scene of his tragic amour to Catania, his home, where he composed *Bianca e Fernando*. This work established him in the musical world, and in a few months he was engaged to write an opera for La Scala, Milan. Here he set to work on *Il Pirata*, keeping up meanwhile a correspondence with Maddelena, which, alas, became on his side, cooler and less frequent until it ceased altogether. When, after the triumph of *Il Pirata*, he was approached by mutual friends on Maddelena's behalf, his successes having melted the heart of her father, he refused to have anything more to do with her, in which, since his ardour had cooled, he was perfectly justified. It was a crushing blow for Maddelena. It is said that when an Italian woman really loves, it is either a fire that rapidly destroys, or a fever that gradually consumes. In Maddelena's



# LA FARFALETTA

Canzoncina Inedita

*Del Mro Car. Vincenzo Bellini*

CANTO

PIANO FORTE

ANDANTINO

*Far fal let ta aspetta aspet ta Non vo lar con tan ta*

*fret ta Far del mal non ti vo gl'i o Fer ma appu ga il de sir*

*mi o Vo ba par ti e il ci bo dar ti Da pe r gli pre ser*

*var ti Di cristal lo stanza a rra i E tran quella ognor vi*

*vra i*



case it was a fever, as she died only a year before Bellini himself, faithful to the last. It was in June, 1834, that she died, and he, for some reason, did not hear of it till a year later, when he wrote to his friend Florimo in a letter full of genuine sadness: "I have a presentiment that in a short time I shall follow to the grave the *poveretta* who is no more, and whom I loved so well." His presentiment was a true one, for in three months he had followed his Maddelena.

It was in Milan that he first met Felice Romani, a poet and man of culture, who became librettist in all his operas save one. Romani, besides being a good poet, had also done a great deal of literary and theatrical criticism, and had made a sensation by saying what he really thought about Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi*, one of the dumbest books in the world, when it came out. He had already done libretti for Meyerbeer, Donizetti, Mercadante, Pacini, and others, but none of these were of great value, so much constrained was he by the strict conventions to which these masters adhered. It was otherwise with Bellini, who flouted the heavy conventions then in vogue, matched his music to the libretto, and, among other innovations, refused to give *prime donne* and tenors roulades and fireworks unless they were supposed to be feeling happy.

At the age of twenty-six Bellini's conquest of the world had begun in earnest, and his personal charm, added to his artistic triumphs threw open to him the doors of the most exclusive houses. It was at this time that he met Giuditta Turina, wife of a rich Lombard, who became the strongest feminine influence of his life, and though a female contemporary describes her as a vulgar woman with nothing but a good figure, she was, nevertheless, the inspiration of his best work. His opera, *La Straniera*, produced also at La Scala with equal success in 1829, was dedicated to her. This amour was a shock to his friend Florimo, who regarded Bellini as a being far above common human weakness. The ideal friendship between these two young men was one of the fairest ornaments of Bellini's short life. Both were Sicilians, and met at the Naples Conservatorio. While Bellini went forth in 1827 to make his great name, Florimo remained at the Conservatorio as Clerk of the Archives, where in his prodigious work, the History of the Conservatorio, years afterwards he was to write the biography of his beloved friend. He was in character the very antithesis of Bellini, austere and thoughtful, a fine restraining influence for Vincenzo's childlike impetuosity. It must not be imagined that Bellini was at all weak, in spite of the sweet melancholy of his countenance. In the matter of contracts he was inflexible, and he not only insisted upon being paid four times as much as any other composer of the past, but latterly he refused to sign a contract that did not specify the artists, chosen by him, who were

to interpret his work. It is only fair to add, in regard to financial matters, that he was a generous friend, and his insistence on good contracts raised for all time the standard of payment, hitherto incredibly poor.

His friend and publisher, Ricordi, of the famous house, writes to him of his "volcanic character." He was not a Sicilian for nothing, and had a habit of believing impulsively everything he was told, being incapable of any insincerity himself, and rushing into unnecessary quarrels. This led to a good many misunderstandings, and in the case of Ricordi, gross injustice, for which Bellini made ample amends, and from which Ricordi emerged with great dignity, with, moreover, their strong friendship intact. It was always so with these little incidents. Bellini never made an enemy though he had naturally many jealous rivals, but they were strangely unsuccessful in harming him. The only exception to this was the case of Romani at Venice, but that will come later. His first disagreeable experience was at Parma, where he was invited to compose an opera for the Ducal Theatre. He was given a manuscript, *Cesare in Egitto*, by Luigi Torrigiani, a native of Parma. Bellini refused this libretto which did not appeal to him, and arranged with Romani to do a poem suggested by Voltaire's *Zaire*. As usual he had his own way, but Parma was annoyed at the slight put upon their own particular genius, and, whatever may have been its merits, *Zaire* was a dead failure, and was never repeated. Its first and last performance was on May 14th, 1829.

From this dismal incident he passed by way of Milan, where *Il Pirata* was revived with acclamation, to Venice, where he was engaged to produce *Il Pirata* for the Venice Theatre. Here, a new opera having failed through illness of the composer, he was suddenly called upon, and after at first refusing, he thought of his abandoned work, *Zaire*. This he adapted to Romani's poem, *Capuletti ed i Montecchi*, which had already been set by Vaccaj. This opera, half new, half old, was produced on May 11th, 1830, with Giuditta Grisi, in the prime of her beauty and talent, as Giulietta. It was a success, full of charm and distinction, but failing in the pathetic situations, especially in the tomb scene, which after Bellini's death, was lifted bodily, and Vaccaj's fourth act put in its place. So that it ended by being rather a hybrid work.

Ten months passed, during which Bellini was seriously ill with the internal complaint that was later to prove fatal. He spent a peaceful convalescence on Lake Como with Giuditta Turina and her family, and in 1831 contracted to write an opera for the Carcano Theatre at Milan. Here not for the first time, he and Donizetti were engaged for the same season. As early as 1828 they were together at Genoa, when *Bianca e Fernando* and Donizetti's



*Regina di Golconda* were done. Bellini meant to do *Ernani*, a serious opera, at the Carcano, but the great success of Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* alarmed him, and he decided to do a lighter work instead. Some of *Ernani* was already done, and a fierce controversy raged between his two biographers, Amore and Scherillo, in the eighties, as to whether he had camouflaged *Ernani* as *Sonnambula* or not. Scherillo says he did, and Amore denies it *con amore*. Much ink, and very nearly blood, flowed over this question, and in the end each of them proved his case to his own satisfaction. The fact remains that the music of *Sonnambula* is throughout appropriate to Romani's pastoral drama, and that seems to be all that matters, even if a few of *Ernani*'s melodies were adapted.

*La Sonnambula* was, at any rate, the success of the season, and Giuditta Pasta created the part of Amina. In the same year, on December 26th, *Norma* was produced at La Scala. The first night was a disaster, though Pasta and Grisi were in it. Bad criticisms the next morning depressed everyone except Bellini, who said "Vedremo, vedremo!" His theory was that it was a diabolical plot to ruin the opera, but, as he writes in a letter on December 31st, "money and the most devilish intrigues can for a short time hide the truth, but in the end it will shine in its real light." And indeed, on the second night the truth was unveiled, and the opera was played to packed houses for the rest of the season. At rehearsal Pasta had refused to sing *Casta Diva*, saying that its technical difficulties were beyond the powers of any *prima donna*. Bellini insisted upon her studying it with him, with the result that she sang it gloriously and it was, of course, the *furor* of the evening. On the wings of *Norma*'s triumph he took flight for his native Catania, his Giuditta accompanying him as far as Naples. There is some doubt as to whether Giuditta's insistence on going with him to Naples was inspired by her desire to meet Florimo, or to "crow over" the unfortunate Maddelena Fumaroli. Perhaps a little of both.

His journey was a long triumphal procession. Everywhere on the way whole towns turned out to greet him, and in Catania he was followed by an adoring crowd always, and was not allowed to pay for anything. This visit was clouded by his strong presentiment that he would never see his parents or his native town again.

Rose-strewn indeed was now the path of Bellini, but the inevitable thorns began to assert themselves at this time and were particularly vicious at Venice, where he appeared after his home visit, to produce *Beatrice di Tenda*. The opera was not ready in time—Romani was late with his libretto—he was much engaged with a love affair. Everyone was talking about it, Venice was annoyed at being kept waiting, and Romani wrote a most unworthy letter to the

press with taunts at Bellini and his "three Giudittas." It was a curious coincidence that Bellini was surrounded by Giudittas at that moment, Giuditta Pasta, Giuditta Grisi, and Giuditta Turina, but though he was no doubt adored by his two *prime donne*, it is most unlikely that there was any truth in Romani's assertions. Bellini's sensitive soul was deeply wounded by Romani's action, and still more by the foul stream of gossip that followed it. When finally the opera was produced in May, 1833, the first night was a complete fiasco. There was such an uproar in the theatre that sometimes the singers could not be heard, and Bellini, who was conducting, says that it was as noisy as a fair, and "all my Sicilian pride possessed me and my intrepid aspect impressed some and enraged others, so that in four or five very effective pieces the public called me, but I remained as though nailed to my seat." One can imagine the intrepid young back obstinately turned. But it was Pasta who changed the humour of the audience. She was so annoyed by the injustice of its attitude that when she sang *Se amar non può, rispettarmi* (if you cannot love me, respect me) instead of addressing her husband in the play she hurled it at the audience, which evoked an immense burst of applause. The work was finished without further incident, and was received with enthusiasm at later performances.

The quarrel with Romani, the unstemmed flow of scandal that was now poisoning also Milan, almost broke Bellini's spirit, and an invitation to go to London was accepted with relief. Here in 1833 *Norma* and *Sonnambula* were "fanatically applauded by the severe English." Pasta sang the leading rôles at first, but half way through the season she was replaced by Maria Malibran (née Garcia) owing to a difference with Bellini. This young singer had already proved herself a serious rival to Pasta. In 1824 Pasta made her first English appearance, and all London was raving about her astonishing voice, which ranged with equal perfection over two and a half octaves. A serious illness in the middle of the season laid her low, and the management in desperation gave the part of Rosina in *Barbiere* to a young girl of seventeen, Maria Felicita Garcia. She studied it for only two days, and on January 7th, 1825, she made her first appearance. Her youth and beauty, her charming voice, and the brave figure that she made in difficult circumstances, delighted the public, and she was immediately engaged for the rest of the season.

And again in 1833 she was at hand to substitute Pasta. Bellini had never seen or heard her, and in a letter to Florimo he describes his arrival in a London fog on the night of her first appearance in *Sonnambula*. From the Duchess of Hamilton's box he watched his poor music "torn to shreds" by these English in their "language of parrots." Only when Malibran appeared he recognised his *Sonnambula*.



So carried away was he by her singing of *Ah! m'abbraccia* (Ah! Embrace me), that he cried "Viva, viva, brava!" with such "*trasporto meridionale*" even "*vulcanico*," that he roused the curiosity of the blond sons of Albion, who recognised him as the author, and the whole theatre burst into wild applause. Not only was he obliged to acknowledge the frantic welcome from the Duchess's box, but he was forced on to the stage by a crowd of "*nobili giovani*," among whom was the Duchess's own son, the young Marquess of Douglas, "*giovinetto* who has in his soul all the poetry of Scotland and in his heart all the fire of the Neapolitans." Malibran was the first to greet him. Singing "*Ah! m'abbraccia!*" she impulsively threw her arms round his neck, and the audience went mad with enthusiasm. "I was in Paradise!" writes Bellini to Florimo.

Fortunate young people they seemed—the blond and the raven-haired—hand in hand, smiling through their tears at the brilliant, critical audience, whose hearts went out to the beauty and genius of the youthful couple. Fortunate they were in that moment, for few are blessed with such an intensity of happiness as must have been theirs in their first meeting. "From that moment I became the intimate friend of Malibran. . . . I have promised to write an opera for her. The idea thrills me, my dear Florimo!"

Alas! all his schemes for the lovely Malibran came to nothing, and she was destined never to create a Bellini rôle. She died exactly a year after Bellini from the effects of a riding accident in London, on September 23rd, 1836, aged 27.

After London came Paris. Rossini was impresario of the Italian theatre, and he engaged Bellini and Donizetti for the season of 1834–35. Bellini was always nervous when Donizetti was about, but he need not have feared him. *I Puritani* was an enormous success, and Donizetti's *Marino Faliero* a ghastly failure. During this time the quarrel with Romani was made up, to Bellini's delight, though, of course, it was too late for another libretto. Count Pepoli wrote *I Puritani*, which is very poor stuff compared with Romani's poetry.

Giuditta Turina's sun had long set, and Bellini was looking for a suitable wife, that is one with two thousand francs *dot* and a good character, well educated, and not ugly. He was quite openly in search of a commodity, one that would, among other things, save him, he thought, from the entanglements in which he was continually finding himself against his will. There were innumerable applicants for this post, but none were completely desirable. One was English, but he found she conducted herself with a curious extravagance, and another had bad teeth, which "disconcerted" him. So he remained single.

In one of his self-revealing letters to his uncle, he says: "*I Puritani* has placed me where I deserve

to be, next after Rossini." In the same letter he says: "My system has always been to mix with the best society wherever I am. . . . As soon as I arrived in Paris I was presented by the British Ambadress, whom I already knew in London, to the most important people in Paris. . . . At the same time I made the acquaintance of the principal artists in music and painting, and of many writers. . . . Every night invitations to soirées, every day dinner either with some distinguished gentleman, or ambassadors or famous artists." After some more intimately personal confidences, he adds in brackets, "*Che insipidezza* that I should repeat such things; but you wanted to hear them, and I hope you won't show this letter to anyone." He goes on to say that the artists in the theatre think him snobbish and "*pieno di fumo*," because he likes to be with people of good position, but it is never snobbishness to despise low company and prefer honourable people. "I owe it to myself." If he was a little bit of a snob, and no doubt he was, he was never a climber, as he had never had to climb. It is doubtful whether he would ever have lent himself to that vile occupation even if it had been necessary. He was probably much too proud. In any case the "Jewel of the British aristocracy," as Florimo calls him, and the idol of fashionable Paris had no need of such methods. After all, a fastidious desire for the best of everything is not altogether to be despised.

In May of 1835 he retired to Puteaux to escape the rigours of social life and rest his overwrought nerves. The anxiety about *I Puritani* and, most of all, the shock of its enormous success, were too much for him. In the home of some English friends he spent a peaceful summer, with constant visits from friends in Paris, which was within easy reach. Early in September he was attacked by his old internal trouble and in a few days he was critically ill. Strange that his host did not call in the best Paris doctors to save this precious life! The only attendant was a young Italian doctor, who wrote the five bulletins, the last in very imperfect French. Not only was no specialist called in, but a gardener was stationed at the front gate with strict orders to refuse admittance to anyone. There was a stream of admirers and friends as soon as the news of his illness reached Paris, and it was natural that some precaution had to be taken to guard the invalid from intrusion, but even his most intimate friends were denied. The only one who succeeded in seeing him was Carafa, who, pretending to be a court physician, got past the guardian of the door. Bellini was semi-delirious, and continually calling for his mother and Florimo.

On September 23rd, a night of tempestuous rain, Baron Aymé d'Aquino, a friend of Bellini's, rang the bell of the house at Puteaux. There was no reply. To his surprise he found the gate open and the



guardian absent. He entered the deserted house and went straight to Bellini's room. There he found his friend apparently asleep. But the hand was cold. Bellini lay dead—in an empty house. The guardian appeared. He had gone to “find someone” and buy candles for the dead. The host and his wife were in Paris! It was not surprising that when Bellini's friends met that night, they were all “perplexed.” The secrecy that was observed all through his illness and the strange loneliness of his death roused all Paris, and there was such a flood of conjecture and suspicion that the King himself ordered an autopsy to be made, if only to satisfy the public that there had been no “political poisoning.” The autopsy proved that he died from natural causes.

Whatever may have lacked Bellini on his death-bed, the whole of Europe mourned him. All the theatres in Paris were closed, the women wore black, in public places the talk was all of the untimely death of the author of *I Puritani*. Rossini hurried back in the middle of a journey as soon as he heard of Bellini's serious illness, and he was the prime mover in the arrangements for the funeral which, in spite of a black downpour of rain, was magnificent, and fit for a king. Thousands lined the drenched streets, a chorus of the principal opera singers sang a specially composed Mass, and Rossini was one of the pall-bearers. The body was laid in the cemetery of Père la Chaise, and a monument executed by Blenat and Marochetti, raised over it. In those days of elaborate and hideous memorials Bellini's was considered simple and in keeping with his character, but it did not escape a trophy and a lyre, with a large-winged angel brooding.

For forty-one years there was an unceasing agitation to effect the translation of Bellini's ashes to his native land, but various causes, among them war, cholera, and endless political disturbances prevented it. The faithful Florimo devoted a great part of his life to this purpose, and was rewarded at last when, on September 15th, 1876, under a misty grey sky that later broke into sunshine, a great company of notable French and Italians gathered at Père la Chaise for the function. Florimo was there, now an old man of 76, and he broke down completely when in a solemn silence the ashes of his dead friend were revealed.

Then followed the second long triumphal progress through Italy. Everywhere cities and towns came to do him reverence as he passed, and the journey was a long crescendo of enthusiastic welcome. Reggio in Calabria, where the embarkation for Sicily took place, indulged in a *festa belliniana*—surging crowds, bands, and choruses, princess and peasant mingling their tears and laughter. But when the “Guiscarda,” which bore him to his home, cast anchor in the harbour of Catania, the scene became indeed fantastic. Every ship in the harbour was decorated with hundreds of coloured lights, the

streets were illuminated with innumerable gas-jets, and from every ship and from every street went up a great cry in unison of “Viva Bellini!” And through it all resounded the vivid crash of fireworks. The Italians have no use for fireworks that are not deafening, and the greater the occasion the more deafening they are. There was certainly nothing funereal in the *feste belliniane*.

But at midnight all was quiet, and the coffin was moved in silence from board ship to an ancient and noble carriage drawn by four horses. An immense crowd that had waited in the dark gathered round, the horses were taken out, and the people dragged the carriage through the dark streets to the church where the coffin was to lie till the solemn ceremony in the Basilica.

The next day the ashes of Bellini reached their final resting place, and over the principal door of the Basilica was inscribed:

This Basilica  
In which sleep forgotten  
The ashes of many kings  
Will be from this day famous  
For the Tomb of  
Vincenzo Bellini

F SHARP.

#### LIST OF BELLINI RECORDS.

(Compiled by the Editor.)

##### LA SONNAMBULA.

##### H.M.V.

- D.B.256 Galli-Curci, *Ah, non credea mirarti* and  
*Come per me sereno.*  
D.B.533 Tetrazzini, *Ah, non credea* and *Ah, non*  
*giunge uman pensiero.*  
D.B.663 Alma Gluck, *Ah, non credea.*  
D.B.428 Sembrich, *Ah, non giunge.*  
D.A.213 Galli-Curci, *Sovra il sen.*  
D.A.101 Chaliapine, *Vi ravello.*  
D.A.377 Scotti, *Vi ravello.*

##### FONOTIPIA.

- 92305 Elvira de Hidalgo, *Ah, non credea.*  
92304 Elvira de Hidalgo, *Come per me sereno.*  
39011 Maria Barrientos, *Ah, non giunge.*  
G.39457 Maria Barrientos, *Come per me sereno.*  
G.39458 Maria Barrientos, *Sovra il sen.*  
C.92753 Rosina Storchio, *Ah, non credea mirarti.*  
92754 Rosina Storchio, *Ah, non giunge uman*  
*pensiero.*  
92979 Carlo Dani, *Prendi l'anel ti dono.*  
N.152014 Lauri Volpi, *A te o cara.*  
C.39084 A. Bonei, *A te o cara.*  
C.39771 Regina Pacini, *Ah vieni al tempio.*



## NORMA.

H.M.V.

- D.B.106 Chaliapine, *Ite sul colle, O Druidi*.  
 D.B.478 Gluck and Homer, *Mira, O Norma*.  
 D.A.566 Pinza, *Ah! del Tebro al giogo indegno*.

COLUMBIA.

- A.5197 Boninsegna, *Casta Diva* and *Ah! Bello a me*.

FONOTIPIA.

- 69061 Giannina Russ, *Ah! Bello a me*.  
 69062 Giannina Russ, *Deh, con te li prende*.  
 3982 Giannina Russ, *Casta Diva*.  
 39893 Coristi del Teatro della Scala, Milan, *Coro de guerrieri*.  
 92811 E. Mazzoleni and G. Zenatello, *In mia man*.  
 92812 E. Mazzoleni, *Teneri Figli*.

## I PURITANI.

H.M.V.

- D.A.445 Flëta, *A te, o cara*.  
 D.B.195 Battistini, *Ah, per sempre* and *Bel sogno beato*.  
 D.B.220 de Luca, *Ah, per sempre*.  
 D.B.259 Galli-Curci, *Qui la voce*.  
 D.A.248 Hempel, *Qui la voce*.  
 D.B.296 Hempel, *Vien, diletto*.  
 D.B.641 Galli-Curci, *Son vergin vezzosa*.  
 D.K.110 Journet and Amato, *Suoni la tromba*.  
 D.967 Radford and Dawson, *Suoni la tromba* (in English).

COLUMBIA.

- 7343 Lazaro, *A te, o cara*.  
 A.5184 Blanchart and Mardones, *Suoni la tromba*.

FONOTIPIA.

- 92529 Amato and Lappi, *Suoni la tromba*.  
 92530 Oreste Lappi, *Cinta di fiou*.  
 C.39010 Barrientos, *Son vergin vezzosa*.

I do not claim that the above list is exhaustive, but it does not omit anything of importance of which I am aware except a very remarkable Re-creation issued by the Edison Company of Claudia Muzio singing *Vien diletto*. However, since playing over again Frieda Hempel's version on this new combination to which I have alluded in my quarterly review, I find that hers is *better*. Galli-Curci's record of *Qui la voce* still holds the field. So does her *Son vergin vezzosa*. In fact I am inclined to wager that in the future her fame will chiefly rest upon her Bellini records. So far she has not attempted *Casta Diva*, and until she does and succeeds with it she cannot claim to be mentioned with the historic sopranos of Italian opera. Meanwhile, the Columbia record of Boninsegna singing this aria is worthy of high praise. To my mind the best record of *A te, o cara* is Bonci's Fonotipia; the next best is Lazaro on Columbia. I just prefer de Luca to Battistini in

*Ah, per sempre*, but the Battistini contains another lovely aria only sung by him and is a better Bellini investment. For *Suoni la tromba* my vote goes to Amato and Journet, but the Fonotipia of Amato and Lappi is superb and that has on the reverse another Bellini aria not found elsewhere; the English version should be avoided.

In *La Sonnambula* the Galli-Curci record of *Ah, non credea* and *Come per me* is her best. The latter aria is followed immediately by *Scora la sen*, also sung by her. The Tetrizzini of *Ah, non giunge* is one of her best. I prefer the Chaliapine record of *Vi ravviso*. In *Norma* the lovely duet by Gluck and Homer of *Mira, O Norma* is noteworthy.

Readers of THE GRAMOPHONE who have not yet made the acquaintance of Bellini should lose no time in doing so. No operatic composer wrote quite so well for the soprano. He is a fountain of lovely melody. Chopin borrowed much from him—especially in the nocturnes. For a long time now it has been the fashion in England to decry Bellini. You might as well decry a thrush. I have heard people apologise for enjoying him, and they might as well have apologised for enjoying the moonlight. But I cannot go on. The blood rushes to my head when I think of the codfish who cannot take any delight in his serene and liquid song.

C. M.

## Illustrations.

Bellini's first opera-cantata, *Adelson e Salvini*, was performed by the students of the Naples Conservatoire in 1825, so that there is an appropriateness in beginning the series of three articles on the "Great Triumvirate"—Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini—with the last of them. The Art Supplement is a contemporary memorial print, published by the courtesy of Signor Gaspare Casella, of Naples, who has also allowed us to reprint the interesting *La Farfalletta*, so far unknown except in the pages of the extremely rare souvenir of the Czar Nicholas's visit to Palermo, to which reference is made at the beginning of the article.

TO SINGERS: TAUGHT OR UNTAUGHT

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# LONDON OFFICE NOTES

## *The Index*

**A**GAIN we have to thank Mr. A. C. Rankin for undertaking the laborious work of making an Index to Vol. II. Owing to ill-health he was obliged to relinquish the half-finished task, and it has been completed and prepared for the press by the Hon. R. Gathorne Hardy. Anyone who has had experience of indexing will appreciate the debt which we all owe to these two enthusiasts—and will appreciate too the reasons why even with all their care there are bound to be omissions and inaccuracies. The Index is more than twice as long as that of Vol. I naturally, and even so it has been necessary to cut out a good many cross-references which would be useful to new readers. But it will be found to contain a vast amount of important information, especially under group-headings, and is as nearly a comprehensive survey of the activities of the gramophone world in the last twelve months as can be compiled till the much-needed Gramophone Year-Book is undertaken. The price is One Shilling, and the Index can be obtained from the London Office or through any of the usual newsagents and dealers. The demand last year was not great, and as the expense of production is very heavy, only a limited number of copies have been printed.

\* \* \*

## *Binding Volume Two*

Now that the Index is available we—the more prudent of us, that is to say—must consider the permanent preservation of the last twelve numbers. They are bulky and heavy—twice as big as the First Volume. By tearing out advertisements at beginning and end and middle of each number we can make one large volume for the binder. Or we can keep the numbers intact and make them into two moderate-sized volumes. But what about the Player-Piano Supplement and the Art Supplement? Should the covers be kept in position, or all put together at the end, or not preserved at all? It is all very confusing. Every member of the office staff has his own suggestions. It seems hopeless to lay down any rules or to have binding cases made and to offer them to our readers.

But one suggestion may be of value. The red spring-back binding cases may not be very elegant, but they are extremely handy. Two of them will take the whole of Volume Two comfortably, and a third will be wanted for current numbers of Volume Three. They cost 3s. 6d. each (plus postage) but this is cheaper than having the numbers bound—and less risky.

Probably most of our readers know these spring-back binding cases. They are in red cloth with gold lettering, simple to manage, and very strong. We recommend them!

\* \* \*

## *Innovations and Improvements*

This binding difficulty has led to some salutary reflections on the arrangement of advertisements, and to an earnest intention to make Volume Three a less maddening proposition. The present number is a step in the right direction. It will be observed that certain matter, such as Translations and Analytical Notes, which some readers like to cut out, is still backed by advertisements; but otherwise the advertisement pages are balanced so that they may—if the owner wishes—be taken out without interfering with the letterpress.

\* \* \*

## *Art Supplements*

The quaint Bellini print which forms the Art Supplement this month is by way of variety. Our readers take curiously divergent attitudes to this Supplement always; and a large number have recently been asking for portraits of the great composers rather than of the great artists. Enquiries have been made, and we are in a position to offer a really remarkable series of coloured portraits of the great composers as our monthly supplement if the demand is a genuinely general one. They are in four colours, they are “exclusive,” and they are fine authentic portraits. *But*—they are very expensive to produce; far too expensive for us to contemplate producing unless by so doing we are carrying out the wishes of a substantial number of readers. As on previous occasions we ask for advice. Just a postcard to the Editor, please. The decision lies with you.

\* \* \*

## *Answers to Queries*

A glance through back numbers shows that a number of sensible queries which have been printed have gone unanswered. “Notes and Queries” was started at the suggestion of readers in order to relieve the overworked staff by encouraging readers to help each other; but now the time has come to attempt to put this matter on a more secure and satisfactory basis. In future technical questions will be submitted to Mr. P. Wilson, who will deal with them in his monthly “Armchair Phonatic” articles; but if an early reply is wanted, a stamped and addressed envelope must accompany the query.



Similarly, all queries about records and catalogues will be submitted to "Piccolo," who has expressed his willingness to do all that he can—out of business hours—to help enquirers; and it is to be hoped that this development of the Notes and Queries sections—which it will take some months to get into order—will make those pages better reading for all of us. Next month we hope to clear off arrears.

\* \* \*

### Frith Street

A year ago the London Office was in a fourth floor maisonnette in Newman Street, and those flights of stairs—which indeed suggested nothing but flight when they confronted *some* of our visitors—are still a memory and reminder of the heights of human endurance. But now, at 58, Frith Street, one wonders how we ever managed *at all* at Newman Street. On the ground floor, with a fine basement, in an eighteenth century house containing remarkable mantel-pieces and a staircase with a beautiful top-light, the offices are convenient and adequate. We have good neighbours—a restaurant on one side, a picture gallery on the other; a few doors off the famous perfumes of Veolay challenge Soho like a rose tree in a kitchen garden; and here too we watch with a wild surmise the vanloads of Peter Pan gramophones being despatched to every corner of the world.

Mozart once lodged in Frith Street, and already we are beginning to convince ourselves that it must have been at Number Fifty-eight. But the Editor says that it was Number Seven.

\* \* \*

### The Covent Garden Opera Season.

Both Polydor and Victor catalogues gain an additional interest in view of the programme of the opera season. Several of the singers are represented only in them. Mr. Herman Klein, who is president of the Critics' Circle this year, devotes his article this month to Covent Garden from the gramophonic point of view. What he wrote about Mme. Jeritza in the December number is of special interest as she has really come to London after all, and with such queer heralding in the Press!

\* \* \*

### New Columbia Catalogue.

A second edition of the 1925 catalogue (brown cover instead of Wedgwood blue) includes all new records up to the end of February. It is a fairly easy matter to trace any record in the Columbia catalogue now, with good eyesight; and comparing this with the last issue, one notices the new arrivals—Dino Borgioli, Cesare Formichi, the Kedroff Quartette, Lionel Tertis, Frank Tinney, Layton and Johnstone, and half a dozen dance bands—and the renewed activities of Pablo Casals, Arthur Catterall, Gipsy Smith, and Melville Gideon, and the steady

reappearance of Norman Allin, the L.S.O., Albert Sammons, W. H. Squire, the Lener Quartet, the Court Symphony Orchestra, Edna Thomas, Arthur Jordan, Harold Williams, Cyril Newton, and Milton Hayes. These names do not, of course, complete the list; but there are many, very many, delectable singers, instrumentalists and ensembles in the Columbia catalogue whose names have been too long absent from the monthly bulletins.

\* \* \*

### A Vocation Dinner

It is a pity that for lack of space we have to refer only briefly to the splendid dinner at which Lord Ampthill and the Vocation Company invited our presence on May 18th at Prince's Restaurant. It was a most interesting function, which gave an opportunity for the demonstration of three things which will be visible and audible to all our readers if they turn up at the Gramophone Congress on July 9th: The World record in an improved form, with a controller enclosed in the motor and adaptable to *any* motor; the amazingly ingenious "Buddha" and other ornamental gramophones, invented by the Marquis Gabriel de Andia Yrarrazaval, which are also loud-speakers, and which will undoubtedly prove the popular attraction of the Vocation stall at the Congress; and finally a cheap device—it can be made for less than five shillings—for throwing pictures on to a screen automatically to illustrate music. To the visionary, at any rate, this last seemed the most important of the three demonstrations. Nursery rhymes were illustrated by music and pictures, and the pictures changed without a hitch to suit the words of the singer. It had all the crudity of a first model, but was pregnant with potentialities; and when one reflects upon the improvements in ordinary recording on which we have recently been able to congratulate the new Vocation Company, one cannot help according them a word of further congratulation on the alertness and prudence which have led them to acquire these attractive side-shows—if side-show is not too mild a word to use for what may easily prove to be milestones in the evolution of the gramophone. We wish them the best of luck.

### MEMORANDA

Write for a Ticket for the GRAMOPHONE CONGRESS on JULY 9th.

Order the Index to Vol. II. of *THE GRAMOPHONE*.

Ask for some Subscription Order Forms and get to work on the CIRCULATION COMPETITION.

Send a Pound for the DE LARA OPERA FUND and get it off your mind.

*THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Frith Street, London, W.1.*





## VINCENT LOPEZ

IN the early days of THE GRAMOPHONE, when the first batch of Parlophone dance records arrived for review, among them were two of Vincent Lopez. I spotted *Crinoline Days* and *Love* as two first-class recordings with a quality all their own. It is always satisfactory to find an independent judgment justified by events. Many Lopez records have rolled up to the office since then, and they have never let me down—they are always among the best. I see that Mr. Herbert in the May number gives two stars to *Me Neenyah* and *I want to be happy*, so change of staff has not produced change of mind—THE GRAMOPHONE is a faithful devotee.

And now Vincent Lopez is here. He and the sun arrived the same day. He is going to stay two months. We shall all go and hear him, of course, either at the Apollo, the Kitcat Club, or the Capitol, where he and his orchestra play for a short half-hour, which seems even shorter than it is. The audience tries to make it longer, but the rest of the programme forbids encores. Except one—when Mr. Lopez sits down and plays the piano for three minutes while we hold our breath. This is butterfly's fare, and not nearly enough for us, so he gives us another twinkling three minutes with *Bing-bing*, a little musical-box tune played with exquisite delicacy. His conducting is as effortless as his playing. He controls with the lift of an eyelid. Good spirits and good humour pervade the whole performance, and in *Meanest Blues* and *Pinafore*, where the whole company transforms itself into Jack Tars and admirals and Little Buttercup, there is genuine comedy.

Vincent Lopez was born in Brooklyn. His father was Spanish, and a musician, his mother a Portuguese lady of high degree, also an accomplished

musician. They wanted little Vincent to be a priest, and he spent three years in a monastery, being trained in missionary work. These three years convinced him that music and not the Church was his vocation, so he took matters into his own hands and after the usual early struggles he realised his ambition to be at the head of his own orchestra when still very young indeed. He and his five men played at one of Broadway's gayest restaurants, the Pekin, for six years. After that they went on the stage as "Vincent Lopez and his Kings of Harmony," and appeared in *Rings of Smoke* and *The Love Bird*.

The Pennsylvania Hotel and Keith's great vaudeville theatre got them next. By this time his orchestra consisted of twelve musicians, and they were soon firmly established as one of the leading dance bands of America. Mr. Lopez does not devote his time exclusively to dance music. In New York he conducts an orchestra of fifty in more serious music, and here he is going to give at least two concerts. The first will probably take place in June, but no date is yet fixed.

It was while he was playing at the Pennsylvania that the Parlophone Co. contracted to record his band exclusively. From those published in England it is difficult to make a selection, but of the earlier ones my own favourites are *Crinoline Days* and *Love*, already mentioned, *Adoring You*, *Forget-me-not*, *I love the girl who kisses*, and *Driftwood*. Of the later records I recommend *Cold Mammies*, *Me and the boy friend*, *Will you remember me*, *A waltz in the moonlight*, and *Me Neenyah*. This last is one of Mr. Lopez' own favourites. The twelfth, last but not least, is *Bing-bing*, the musical-box solo, without which no Sesame or Jussrite cabinet is complete.

F. #



# ARMCHAIR PHONATICS

By P. WILSON, M.A. (Oxon)

## II.—Record Wear

I HAVE been asked this month to deal with the subject of record wear under various conditions. This is anticipating somewhat the programme I had mapped out, but the subject is so important to most of us that I gladly comply with the request.

It is necessary to notice at the start that there are two kinds of wear due to essentially different causes. Both kinds occur at all parts of a record, but one is more prominent at the outside and the other at the inside. The first consists of a roughening of the walls of the groove which may be so minute as to be imperceptible to the eye. This impresses on the diaphragm vibrations of a very high pitch—which may be anything between about 1,000 and 8,000 per second—and these produce a pronounced scratch. One feature which distinguishes this kind of wear from the second kind to be noticed presently is that for a considerable time it does not modify the actual sounds reproduced, but merely adds another to them. In other words, the groove has been pitted and scraped but has not been substantially altered in form.

These imperfections exist in some degree even in a new record; but there they are more often granular projections, or "knobs," than "pits." With careful playing, a new record may for a time be improved, partly by the smoothing out of these knobs, and partly by the removal of the fluff, etc., left by the polishing buff. With a heavy steel needle the improvement usually lasts only for a very short time; indeed some of the knobs get violently unseated and pits are left in their place. With a fine metal needle the improvement is more gradual and less violent. Owing to their shape and softer material, fibre needles may continue the improvement for a very long time. I know of some records which have been played over 1,000 times with fibres and even now they are better than new. The difficulty with fibres in the past has been that the knobs and the fluff on a new record have broken down the point. It has, therefore, become the practice with fibre users to play a record for the first time with steel. The advent of semi-permanent fibres has, however, changed all that; they smooth out knobs more gently and remove fluff more effectively than a steel needle can normally do. To me that is their chief boon. A belief in improved tone or increased volume may often be put down to self-deception. But no one who has given S.P. fibres an extended trial can doubt that they do effectively clean the foreign matter from the grooves and give the record a certain amount of polish. Many of the ordinary fibres which one

can buy nowadays seem to be heavily oiled, and these not only do not remove the fluff but even add their own debris to it. The old Nightingale fibres, alas, went west in the Japanese earthquake.

As it is impossible to get a perfectly smooth surface, it follows that surface noise cannot be entirely eliminated in the record itself. The larger the number of irregularities per second which hit the needle, the higher the pitch of the surface noise. Since the greatest length of groove per second passes under the needle at the outside of a record, the surface noise is more penetrating there. If the record material is coarse, the pitch may be lowered, but the volume of noise is greater, since the irregularities are larger. Hence, for example, the difference between the scratch of the Columbia new and old process records.

The second kind of record wear consists of a definite breaking down of the walls of the groove. In its most virulent form it shows itself to the eye as a "grey line," and to the ear as a cough or screech. But some time before the grey line becomes visible it can be detected by the ear as a fraying of the edge of a note. If the wall between two grooves is very thin it is easily broken down even by the most tender treatment. Faults of this kind may either be due to too heavy recording or they may be accidental, the peaks of two loud notes happening to meet at the same point. Some Parlophone records provide examples of the former; the lovely Columbia Lener Quartet record L1460 unfortunately provides one or two examples of the latter. But steel needles in a badly adjusted sound-box, particularly when coupled with a faulty alignment, will play havoc even with records which are free from this defect. (Fibre needles will break down in these circumstances before they can do very much damage.) The more sensitive the sound-box the easier it is for the needle to follow the groove. If the diaphragm or the tension springs are too stiff the needle, which by this time may have developed a chisel point, will cut through the walls rather than follow round the groove. I have seen very substantial shavings being pared off in this way. They are brown in colour and are easily distinguishable from the grey fluff mentioned above. At the inside of a record the groove is more "wavy" than at the outside, owing to the reduced length which passes under the needle per second. It is at the inside, therefore, that this wear principally occurs, though a heavy note of high pitch will give rise to it anywhere.

*(To be continued.)* P. WILSON.



## THE FORUM

The following articles are unsolicited contributions from readers, dealing with this or that aspect of the gramophone to which each has given thought. It is proposed to publish a selection each month, and to offer prizes for the three best articles every quarter. The decision will rest with our readers, who will in due course be invited to record their votes. Articles should in no case exceed 1,500 words, and should be typewritten or written *very* legibly. A stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed.



### REALISM AND THE GRAMOPHONE

By C. S. DAVIS

AT a meeting of the Liverpool Gramophone Society on April 22nd, when we were honoured by a visit from the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE, who took the chair at a demonstration of the Orchorsol Gramophone given by the writer, Mr. Mackenzie during the course of his remarks spoke with his usual characteristic frankness and piquancy upon the fibre and steel question so controversially familiar to gramophonists.

It was a question of philosophy, Mr. Mackenzie said, a question which went much deeper than the gramophone itself and one which affected our fundamental beliefs. Either you were a romanticist or a realist, either you wanted illusion or truth, and he feared that gramophonists were inclined to dope themselves with mellow-toned instruments, composition diaphragms, and fibre needles, all of which produced very pleasant illusions but did not give us a true reproduction of music.

There is nothing new to readers of THE GRAMOPHONE in this statement; Mr. Mackenzie has repeatedly and forcibly expressed his views on the subject, and in his quarterly review of records in the May issue further emphasises several points mentioned in my outline of his remarks. It is, however, because I feel that there is so much (but yet not the whole) truth in what Mr. Mackenzie says that I think the subject is worth even more detailed consideration and analysis.

First of all, Mr. Mackenzie has at least done us a service by attempting to define the problem in terms of philosophy—to my mind perhaps the most important aspect of it. Either you are a romanticist or a realist—that, Mr. Mackenzie thinks, is the crux of the problem. I agree, but would like slightly to amend the definition. Romanticism and realism are not really antitheses. Rather I would say, either you are a romanticist or an actualist, an idealist or a materialist, either you believe in the supremacy of fantasy or the inevitability of fact. It is really the old problem of Descartes *versus* Darwin, of mind *versus* matter, and both schools are right—and wrong. The one, as Aristotle would tell us, is a fault in excess of, and the other a fault in defect of, the mean, which is—realism.

If you believe in The Good, The Beautiful, and The True as Absolute Values, you must also believe in Absolute Reality, to which reality is the reflected state which we aspire to achieve and inhabit. Now reality, I believe, includes both the romantic and the actual, the ideal, and the material; it is a state which occurs at rare moments in our lives when both qualities merge and are transcended, when we react—super-sensitively—to certain external or internal stimuli, and emotion, intellect, and intuition become infused with a spiritual intensity of vision that verges upon the infinite, when time and space for a brief interval stand still. It may occur in the reading of a poem, in the witnessing of a play, in a

glimpse of nature, or—and I venture to think most often—in listening to great and beautiful music. To many of us, however, it is God's justification to man, the gold of life beside which the ordinary stress and routine of existence are merely the dross, the quest of which alone makes life livable and worth living for.

Now let us return to our forgotten sheep which in the meantime have been grazing on steel and fibre, and probably in the process acquiring mental indigestion to a considerable degree. The first and obvious conclusion is that we are a long way from realism in gramophone reproduction to-day. (The moment it arrives discussion on the merits or demerits of steel, fibre, diaphragms, sound-boxes, and other gadgets will automatically cease.) In the absence of realism we have the two extreme factions of romanticists and actualists both trying to convince us that they are right. Personally I believe that both are—partly right, and that realism if and when it arrives, whatever its technical shape may be (and in point of gramophone, record, and needle, its impedimenta may quite conceivably be utterly different to any of the articles we know by these names at present) will synthesise the virtues and discard the defects of both romanticism and actualism. In other words, I believe that both our “mellow” and “clear” toned gramophones, our composition and mica diaphragms, our fibre and steel needles are only compromises, and, if as Mr. Mackenzie says, “the fibre is the realist's counsel of despair,” I think we may say with equal justification that steel is the “actualist's apology.”

As, however, we must exist gramophonically until the millennium arrives, let us consider our compromises in a little more detail. Now, apart from the consideration of wear and surface noise there must be some reason other than the one Mr. Mackenzie suggests to account for the increasing use among a not unintelligent section of gramophone lovers of the fibre needle. The obvious reason which suggests itself is that steel has failed to satisfy. Why? Because with very few exceptions there is always a certain sense of blatancy and metallic ring which is absent from the actual performance. Fibre at least hides or minimises these faults. Mr. Mackenzie will probably reply, rather let us have truth of tone *with* impurities and harshness than distortion without. But what actually is the extent of the distortion with fibre? It reduces volume, it is true, but if other conditions are taken into consideration, I cannot for the life of me see that you get any more distortion with fibre than with steel. As a matter of fact, it all boils down to a question of tone-perspective. So long as we can get in our own rooms the impression of an orchestra playing or an artist singing in a very much bigger room (*i.e.*, the concert hall or theatre constructed for the purpose) it really doesn't matter a hang



how we obtain the results. But as a matter of actual practice I believe we are more likely under modern housing conditions to get these results (or rather dimly approximate to them) with fibre than with steel. There is, at any rate, one perfectly safe axiom by which we can be guided. Whenever a record sounds too loud for a room and tends to deafen it must be wrong, because too much volume, like too little, means loss of definition and tone-values, and the effect of an orchestra playing fortissimo in a suitable hall is never deafening, there is always a comparatively even diffusion of sound.

There is another point which I may mention as the result of constant experience; I have converted dozens of musicians and music-lovers (who have approached the gramophone with the usual bias of the uninformed) through the medium of fibre, and I am of opinion that the gramophone will only begin to make real progress when it numbers among its devotees every musician and every cultured man and woman in the country—because these are the only people who are capable of offering criticism and demanding the best—and who could make it pay the manufacturers to produce the best.

There is just one final point I should like to dispose of. Mr. Mackenzie fears (and I should share his fears equally if I thought they were well grounded) the tendency of the fibre user to become self-satisfied and to feel that he has got as far as is possible and need not worry any further about tone. Now, just as it is imperative to train oneself to listen to music at all, so, as long as the gramophone falls short of pure realism, until it becomes in fact a perfectly efficient machine for reproducing music, it is equally essential to train oneself to listen to the gramophone through one's own particular medium, whether it be fibre, steel, mica, aluminium. And I can assure Mr. Mackenzie that the fibrist listens every bit as

acutely and critically for imperfections both in recording and reproduction as the "steelite," and is every bit as impatient for progress (I may mention incidentally that the fibre user is generally a far greater sound-box fiend than the man of steel, which points to quite a healthy dissatisfaction with his own contemporary standards from time to time).

I have necessarily only touched very briefly upon the subject because of the exigencies of space, but the elaboration of the points I have mentioned must be quite patent to everyone who cares to give the matter a little thought. If I have appeared to uphold the use of fibre against steel, it is only because I think that under existing circumstances there is equal justification for both. It is impossible to lay down any hard and fast law; gramophone, record, the size and acoustic properties of the room and a proper sense of tone-perspective, must all contribute to determine what type of needles should be used, and these will obviously vary according to individual conditions. We must, however, beware of allowing our attitude to the needle question to smack of pedantry by its assuming too great an importance, as it is after all of importance only in relation to the much greater problem of progress, which is more likely to materialise through improvements of a perhaps entirely revolutionary nature in general gramophone construction and recording processes.

In conclusion I should like to emphasise the fact that we are all probably aiming at the same goal—realism, and the sooner we acknowledge that all our existing means to this end are merely compromises instead of trying to delude ourselves and others into believing that our equipment is the only right one, the sooner we are likely to help ourselves and others to attain to it.

C. S. D.

## OF CATALOGUES AND SCRAPBOOKS

By JOHN C. W. CHAPMAN

**A** PRAISEWORTHY regard for the truth impels me to admit that the ideas hereinafter described are not the sole product of my marvellous brain, but owe their origin in part to my habit of observing other people's methods and endeavouring to improve on them. I therefore outline two simple and efficient ways of cataloguing a collection of records—by sections and by composers. They can be used independently or simultaneously. All you need is a cheap movable-leaf album, and I know of no better place to get one than the philatelic firm of Bright and Son, 164, Strand, London, W.C.

In the sectional method let us suppose you divide your records into the following groups:—

- |                            |                   |                       |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) Bands.                 | (2) Orchestral.   | (3) Vocal (Operatic). |
| (4) Vocal (miscellaneous). | (5) Instrumental. | (6) Chamber Music.    |

Of course, if you have a very large collection you will sub-divide (5) into various groups, such as violin solos, piano solos, etc.; (6) into sonatas, trios, quartets, etc.; and the vocal sections can be further split up with advantage.

Your headings should be carried along the oblong of each page, thus:

### ORCHESTRAL.

COMPOSER.	TITLE.	PLAYED BY.	RECORD.	SIDES.	DATE OF PURCHASE.
Mendelssohn ..	<i>Fingal's Cave (Hebrides)</i> Overture.	New Queen's Hall Orchestra, conducted by Sir Henry J. Wood.	Columbia	2	—

In the operatic section you will naturally have an additional column at the extreme left for the names of the operas.

The method of classification by composers is equally simple. Beneath each composer's name should be pasted the short printed descriptions, which can be cut out of last year's H.M.V. catalogue, as follows:—



## BACH.

**BACH, JOHANN SEBASTIAN** (Bakb) (1685-1750)—**Composer**

Born Eisenach, Prussia, 1685. Family very musical. Was taught violin by father and afterwards studied clavichord. Chorister at Luneberg, 1700. Organist, Armstadt, 1704; appointed Court organist at Weimar, 1707; then *Concertmeister*. *Kapellmeister* at Coethen 1717 to 1723, then director of several Leipsic churches. Married twice; 20 children. Was a master of fugue and counterpoint. Works numerous, including 300 church cantatas, many organ works, suites, concertos, etc. Larger works include *Mass in B minor*, *Christmas Oratorio*, *Passion of St. John and St. Matthew*. Bach died in 1750, after having become almost blind.

TITLE.	DESCRIPTION.	PLAYED BY.	RECORD.	SIDES.	DATE OF PURCHASE.
<i>Come, Sweet Death</i> ..	Viola solo .. ..	Lionel Tertis .. ..	Columbia	1	—
<i>Prelude</i> .. ..	Harpsichord solo ..	Violet Gordon Woodhouse	H.M.V.	$\frac{1}{2}$	—
<i>Second Movement (Largo)</i> from <i>Concerto for Two</i> <i>Violins in D minor</i> .	Violin duet, with piano.	Jelly D'Aranyi, Adila Fachiri, and Ethel Hobday.	Vocalion	2	—

A record of the total number of discs in your possession is usefully entered, also across the oblong of the page, thus :

Dates 1925	Apl. 21	Apl. 30																	
No. of records ..	100	110																	
No. of sides ..	200	220																	
No. of 12in. ..	70	75																	
No. of 10in. ..	30	35																	
H.M.V. ..	30	33																	
Columbia ..	25	28																	
Vocalion ..	25	27																	
Parlophone ..	20	22																	

Now as to scrapbooks. I shall be regarded as a vandal, I know, but I don't keep my GRAMOPHONES intact. Instead, I cut them up, place the reviews of records and words and translations of songs in separate large envelopes, prepare the articles for insertion in scrapbooks, and—after selecting some of the letters and certain Notes and Queries—throw the rest away, making, of course, an exception in favour of the plates of celebrities, for which I purpose buying a photo album.

I make my scrapbooks myself, but that is a matter of personal choice. A scrapbook is easily made by obtaining a quantity of large sheets of plain white paper and cutting it so as to form the size of page desired when folded. The cover is formed of two pieces of stout cardboard covered with art cretonne, which is pasted on, the inside of the cover being stuck down with two or three layers of white paper. To press out flat you must purloin the family pastry board and place it on top of the freshly pasted cover, beneath which should be another board or a pad of nicely smoothed brown parcel paper. Place the lot (pastry board uppermost) beneath the leg of a bedstead or other heavy piece of furniture for a few hours. Bind the leaves in the cover with thin, stout string, and the scrapbook has materialised.

I do not confine myself entirely to THE GRAMOPHONE in selecting the contents of these scrapbooks; intelligent articles on matters gramophonic are sometimes found outside the talking machine press, and valuable cuttings are often obtainable from the excellent monthly lists of H.M.V., Columbia, Vocalion, and Parlophone. Where advertisements form the obverse of the articles to be pasted in, I stick them directly on the pages of the scrapbooks. But where articles are "backed" by their continuations I stick down the left-hand margin only, allowing the right-hand edges of the succeeding pages to overlap slightly, which makes it clear how many pages are stuck on each scrapbook leaf and facilitates turning over. These scrapbooks thus form a valuable gramophonic reference library.

In a large exercise book I paste reviews and words and translations of records actually in my collection, writing the latter where cuttings are not available. By this means I add not only to my own enjoyment but to that of my friends, whose pleasure in my vocal records is enhanced by being able to follow them.

Of course, these books cannot be compiled without the expenditure of a good deal of time and trouble (plus much paste!), but they repay a thousandfold the efforts expended on them and add still one more joy to the pleasures of gramophony.

JOHN C. W. CHAPMAN.



# PORTABLUNDERINGS

By ERIC N. SIMONS

IT was a fine, warm, sunny summer afternoon, and what is more, Ermytrude, looking out of the window of our country bungalow, perceived it. So did her sister Joanna, who was spending a fortnight with us. And in the inconsequential way some women have—Ermytrude and Joanna are very much alike in this—they began to think of picnicking.

In my opinion, when I am allowed to have one, you live in the country to avoid the necessity for picnics. They are all very well for folk who live among chimney stacks or tramcars; but country dwellers can surely dispense with them. Ermytrude thinks so too, except when Joanna comes to stay with us. Joanna lives in the town, and so we have to pretend to like picnicking for her sake; because, she tells us, *ad nauseam*, the very *thought* of a picnic *thrills* her. I should pray for wet weather when she comes, did she not insist on singing to us while it rains. Joanna's singing accompanied by rain is a combination of two extremely watery things that makes one think of the Flood. I must say, I prefer Galli-Curci.

But on this fine afternoon there was no need to listen to Joanna. Ermytrude had willed a picnic. And, of course, I perceived that I should have to take the new portable gramophone that Ermytrude had bought me as a birthday present. Ermytrude is so averse from pandering to my "gramomania" that she would rather buy me a guinea hat that I do not want than an 8s. 6d. celebrity record that I do. That is why I could not understand this sudden change of front in buying me a portable unasked, until I remembered Joanna and her picnics.

"Now," said Ermytrude, when certain operations, in which cucumber, tomatoes, and damp cloths played an important part, were concluded, "don't you think it would be a good idea to bring the new portable, John? John's mad on gramophones, Joanna! But I should like you to hear his latest. It's so jolly to be able to sit and have beautiful music in the open air."

I must confess that this idea sounded more sensible than Ermytrude's usually do, so I complied with it.

"What shall I take in the way of records?" I asked cheerfully.

"Oh, well, now let me see!—Yes, we must have that latest thing of Galli-Curci's. And *Santa Lucia*, and that jolly thing that Alma Gluck sings—*La Serenata*. Then—yes, a couple of good fox-trots!"

"I thought you told Joanna she was going to hear beautiful music in the open air," I said mildly, but she ignored me.

"Then I think you might put in that jolly No. 2 *Military Band Suite* of Holst's. Oh, and we *must* have the *Beggar's Opera* records! Joanna hasn't heard those. There are only five that matter. You might bring half-a-dozen *Patience*, too. Joanna likes Gilbert and Sullivan."

"Here," I said, "don't you think I'd better get a furniture van and bring the lot?"

"How many have I chosen? Only seventeen, and your carrying case holds twenty. I should make up with *Rufy Tuffy*, *Mignon*, and *Euryanthe*. We shall have a nice selection then."

There is no arguing with Ermytrude. I pointed out that twenty records take a lot of carrying; but she only answered that the H.M.V. people wouldn't make a carrying case to hold twenty records if twenty were too many to carry.

So we set off. I need scarcely say that Ermytrude did not

carry the records. She carried the gramophone. I had the records, and the tea as well in a rucksack strapped on my back. It was, as I have said before, a hot and sunny afternoon. I do not know if you have ever tried to carry twenty records and a tea for three people along a stony country lane, at a temperature of 82° in the shade, with two idiotic women in front of you who keep asking your opinion on the scenery, and call you bad-tempered when you do not wax enthusiastic; but if you have, you will sympathise with me.

But worse was to come.

Our way led through a wood traversed by a shallow stream. The soil was boggy in places, and of course Joanna had come out for a country walk in grey suède shoes and grey silk stockings. She always does. The result was that at every muddy place I had to deposit my case in the slush, and lift Joanna over. I am now firmly convinced that women put these insubstantial shoes and stockings on for country tramps so that men shall put their arms round them and lift them about. They like that. It's the only chance of it some of them get.

To cap everything, Joanna must choose a particularly marshy spot in which to be skittish, and instead of surrendering herself to my manly extended arms, must try to jump across. She landed with both feet on the carrying case that I had set down. A carrying case will stand a good deal, but, like me, it cannot stand Joanna, and showed it by an expressive dent. Incidentally, my best Galli-Curci record was cracked, but Ermytrude said that that didn't matter and I could easily get another. Besides, it was careless of me to put the case in Joanna's way like that.

At last, with my temper ruffled and my garments dripping wet, I reached the little glade where Ermytrude proposed we should picnic. Of course, I had to get everything ready while she pointed out scenic beauties to Joanna, who was much more interested in the amount of mud her shoes had collected. Yet when the meal was ready, nothing would satisfy Joanna but music while she ate. She said that listening to music while she ate improved her digestion. Mine, of course, didn't matter, and since I had to jump up between mouthfuls to change records and needles and wind the motor, it could hardly be said to benefit. But Joanna is used to cafés where they have an orchestra of two, a long-haired male violinist and a short-haired female pianist, and where nobody listens until the orchestra stops, when they fill up the vacuum with clapping, noise of some kind being essential to the Joannas of this world.

I may be wrong, but I contend fiercely that Alma Gluck and cucumber sandwiches do not go together. Even Holst does not agree with tomatoes. But I am firmly convinced that in Joanna's mind there is no essential antithesis between a Beethoven symphony and an olla podrida. She would eat shrimps to the sound of Handel's *Water Music*.

When the meal was over—Ermytrude actually dared to say I was slow—nothing would satisfy them but a fox-trot. The sylvan serenity of that fair scene was not complete for them without the vulgar brayings of the wry-necked saxophone. And, of course, as soon as the disgusting instrument began its cacophony, they must up and dance. Gods! If there is any sight more ridiculous than that of two high-heeled, stiff-corseted women fox-trotting in a glade to the sound of the saxophone, let me die before I see it. I buried my head in shame and watched the spinning disc whence the grunting and squealing proceeded. That was why I failed to see catastrophe impending. There was a sudden swish of



whirling skirts, a scream, and a terrible, heart-rending squawk from the portable as it overturned. Their flying feet had caught it and sent it scuttering into the bracken.

That finished it for me. The ancestral male awoke within my bosom. I rose and asserted myself.

"Now you've done it!" I roared. "Serves you right for a pair of capering lunatics. You've worn me to a shadow carrying things for you. You've spoilt my meal and my digestion in making me grind music out while you sat and stuffed and chattered. And now you've ruined the machine itself. I'm through!" (That last bit was borrowed from the pictures, I confess, but it was the sort of thing Joanna understood, and it cowed her.) Joanna, you shall carry the

records. Ermyntrude, you must take what's left of the meal. I shall take the portable myself."

I rescued it from the bracken. The soundbox was cracked, the record broken, the frame a trifle battered; but on the whole, it had stood the test well.

We walked back in silence, and I did not greatly care when it came on to rain heavily with an accompaniment of thunder and lightning. After what had happened it was comforting to my soul to see Joanna bedraggled and miry, with fear in her heart and a case of twenty records in her arms.

But you will understand, now, why I am advertising for sale a "Portable Gramophone, excellent condition, by high-class maker. What offers?"

ERIC N. SIMONS.



## PADEREWSKI'S RECORDS

A Note By B. D. W.

PADEREWSKI'S records are not for the cynic, but they provide considerable thought for the technician and the musician. The great pianist's personality is admirably conveyed, but the very faithfulness of the translation causes any little defects in the recording to stand out with unusual prominence. A definite indictment of the faults of these records is silenced by the fact that they were made under different conditions from those under which the majority of our modern pianoforte records were made. The most important point of difference lies in the fact that the piano used was Paderewski's own piano—an Erard. This piano has a typically hard, brilliant tone, essentially shallow, and it cannot be considered the ideal piano from which to make records of such a pianist as Paderewski.

Paderewski "thumps" and in a most unrestrained manner at that; whilst indiscriminate gradation of dynamics may be permissible in a large concert hall it is utterly devastating in the small recording rooms. Paderewski is probably too great an artist for the word "indiscriminate" to be entirely just, but in listening to his records we cannot help feeling that they would have been considerably improved had the range of "dynamics" been more restricted.

The inability of the gramophone to reproduce heavily hit piano notes, particularly when those notes occur in the first few grooves of a twelve-inch record, is particularly apparent in two or three of these records, and the complaint is aggravated by the harshness of the piano tone. No wonder the beginning of Schumann's *Aufschwung* was said to be "frantic banging": it is. But curiously enough, the very passage which causes the terrible noise at the beginning of the record acquires a splendid sonority when it reappears later on in the record. This complaint of inability to reproduce low notes well at the beginning of a twelve-inch record has been successfully overcome in the latest records issued by the Gramophone Company, but whether the methods they applied to Cortot and Thibaud will prove successful as applied to Paderewski and his harsh toned pianoforte, the future bulletins must be allowed to prove. As it is the American recording rather defeats its own aims. The records are obviously meant to be very loud and they are loud, but the recording technique was not sufficiently perfect to cope with the mighty left hand of the master, and in pieces such as the Schumann *Aufschwung* and the hackneyed *Hungarian Rhapsody* of Liszt, the piano is transformed into a tin tub being very vigorously beaten by a broomstick.

Apart from the defect that in all pieces with strenuous passages occurring at the commencement of the disc there is this "laboured crashing," the general effect of all the records

on the 1925 catalogue is an excellent reproduction of the Erard tone. I would therefore recommend anyone who wishes to get a good Paderewski record to avoid the more exciting pieces and choose one of the records listed at the end of this note. To get the best reproduction the records should be played on the pleated diaphragm of Monsieur Lumiere and the Gramophone Company; it is the only possible medium to obviate entirely the unpleasant *xylophone-cum-banjo* effect produced by them in conjunction with the ordinary sound-box. The best sound-box to use, if sound-boxes must be used, is the No. 2 sound-box of the Gramophone Company. The pleated diaphragm is, however, the only reproducing unit by which you can get a true impression of the way Paderewski can turn a mere *fortissimo* passage into the thunder of an Olympian Zeus.

The selection of pieces which Paderewski has recorded is appallingly dull; the usual collection of snippets which was considered *de rigueur* until a year or so ago. There are one or two little things upon the list, however, which are not obtainable in record form in English lists elsewhere (or if they are, not in so modern a recording).

We are grateful for the *Warum?* and the *Aufschwung* from the *Phantasiestücke*, but after hearing the latter we must feel inclined to thank heaven that the pianist did not go on to record *Grillen* from the same series! The *Warum?* is indeed one of the best pieces of recording on his list. The two recent *Mazurkas* are disappointing technically for, although they represent a better and higher standard of recording, they leave one feeling dissatisfied.

For the pianist's own compositions, the less said the better; the *Cracovienne Fantastique* is entertaining, but the remaining two pieces are unutterably tedious. It may seem ungracious to say so, but why waste three whole sides on second-rate stuff like this when there are about forty thousand pianoforte pieces of merit awaiting recording? The same regret for wasted space applies to the horribly sentimental *Chant d'Amour* by a person called Stojovski.

As to the Liszt pieces, these also would have been better avoided. Paderewski's style is far too clear and concise to prevent us from becoming bored with Liszt's eternal and unchanging repetitions. Repetition is mechanical; we can afford to let the gramophone do that. Both the *Hungarian Rhapsody* and *La Campanella*, then, are to be avoided if it is desired to get a record you will not mind hearing after the tenth playing or so. (Quite incidentally *La Campanella* is a piece written originally for the violin by Paganini, and the original version has been recorded by Bronislav Huberman under the name *La Clochette*.) The arrangement by Liszt and



its performance by Paderewski are going one better along the wrong road into which Kreisler strayed when he played his own arrangement of Paderewski's *Minuet*.

If we are ever to know Paderewski as the great musician he is reputed to be let us have some Beethoven and Schumann, some of the less-well-known nocturnes of Chopin, and some Mozart! For myself, I think that the most satisfactory records that Paderewski could make would be of Mozart. He would not get the opportunity to let himself go. The Erard piano is probably inseparable from him and its shallow tone is more suitable to the Bach-Mozart-Haydn school than to the writers for the more full-blooded grand pianoforte.

Here are the best records on the list:—

1. *Warum?* (Schumann).
2. *Nocturne, Op. 15, No. 2* (Chopin).
3. *Etude in G flat, Op. 25, No. 2* (Chopin).
4. *Two Mazurkas, Op. 59, Nos. 2 and 3* (Chopin).
5. *La Campanella* (Paganini-Liszt).
6. *Valse in C sharp minor* (Chopin).
7. *La Bandoline* (Couperin).

The records in the No. 2 catalogue are remarkably good

considering the comparatively poor technique of recording at the time. The list contains some unusual pieces.

No sooner had I written this article than there came the new record issued in the May supplement of H.M.V. Without doubt this is head and shoulders above any previous records of Paderewski, and it can be ranked as one of the finest for pianoforte tone in existence. It is, if one is to judge from the little "run out" device at the end of each side, of American origin. As for the music recorded, it is Schubert at his best. There is far less tedious repetition than in the majority of the composer's instrumental pieces. The playing is delightful, romantic and firm and quite free from the terrible thumping of Paderewski's other records. Let us hope that it is merely the harbinger of a whole series of beautiful records. Virtuosos of the mental capacity of Paderewski come not once in a lifetime or even in a century. Criticism of such a pianist patriot is petty. He has had a life of the most overwhelming self sacrifice, and a man who can desert his capacity as a virtuoso to take an active part in the liberation of his country, ultimately to look upon his victories from the proud eminence of "First President" of Poland is no ordinary man, to be bound by such narrow limits as our horribly unhealthy little virtuosos (who never grow up from their "Little Lord Fauntleroy" styles and thoughts). In contemporary culture he and D'Annunzio stand alone.



## "HOW TO SELL GRAMOPHONES"

By "SCRUTATOR"

I RECENTLY read an extract from one of those American type efficiency magazines, which exist apparently to tell us all how it is (or ought to be) done, to the effect that if the writer was selling gramophones (he very evidently is not!), he would not invite people to his shop, but would take the models round to their homes, so that they could not only discover their merits and de-merits, but also study the general effect of the various styles with the furniture of the room.

I regard the idea as a positive brain-wave, and a vastly considerable improvement on the weird ideas the dear old Editor set forth on page 245 of the May, 1924, issue. Instead of filling up a sort of glorified income tax-cum-insurance form telling him—

- (a) If you are C. of E. or Bolshevik in religion,
- (b) If you prefer the works of Ethel M. Dell to those of Scott in literature,
- (c) If you are a pre-Raphaelite or a cubist in art,
- (d) If you prefer the poems of "Touchstone" in the *Daily Mail* to those of Swinburne,
- (e) If your musical predilections run to a Jew's harp rather than a mouth organ, and
- (f) If any of the family have died of consumption,

you simply write to the nearest gramophone dealer carrying large stocks of machines, asking him to send round in a horse-drawn furniture van ten of his largest models (such as the Algraphone, which often appears on the back cover of THE GRAMOPHONE), with instructions to the driver to put his horses to the gallop on entering the street so as to impress the neighbours. If the arrival of the van could be arranged to synchronise with the letting out of the local school, so much the better.

On its arrival I should have the gramophones carried in one by one and moved about the room, to study the effect on the other furniture; but I regard this as being quite

immaterial; the man who has the roots of the matter in him would soon sell a suite of furniture, and get a new one of Queen Anne, Alfred the Great, or some other "deceased" design to match the chosen model.

Having tried them all over, I should ask for the first one to be brought in again, and as it would by now be at the far end of the van with several others in the way, the remarks of the Head Furniture Remover would, in all probability, be what Bret Harte would term "frequent and painful and free." (A record of these remarks made on the spot would doubtless have a large sale among the proletariat and small boys.)

In the interval between trying each model over, the large crowd outside could be entertained by selections played by such models which happened at any one time to be occupying the pavement and roadway. A short lecture on "Musical Appreciation" (and other things) could also be given by the aforesaid H.F.R., and perhaps a 'phone or two sold. By the time all the models had been tried over a second time, I should have such a muddled version of their various merits and demerits, period of design (Adams or Eves), tonal qualities (forward, backward, or sideways), needle track alignment (Woodrow or Wilson), that it would be necessary to have some quiet reflection. I should therefore ask the H.F.R. to put them all back in the van and come round to-morrow with about thirty portables for my final approval and selection. I should then close the front door rapidly to escape his further observations, lest they should disturb my quiet contemplation. Anyhow, there are considerable possibilities in the idea, and I suggest the Editor circularises the trade on the subject; their replies should be illuminating, if not lurid. I anticipate the following from the manager of Messrs. Alfred Imhof's establishment:—

"I've been selling gramophones for many a year,  
In spite of contumely, scorn and scoff;  
But if this sort of thing should ever appear,  
Well! I'm hoff."



## AN IMPERIAL OPERA HOUSE

IN February a leaflet describing Mr. Isidore de Lara's scheme for an Imperial and Permanent Opera House in London was enclosed in every copy of THE GRAMOPHONE; and in recommending it to the attention of our readers we offered to accept donations (limited to £1) and to guarantee the integrity of the money until the time came for us either to hand the total over to Mr. de Lara when his scheme was in sight of realisation or, alternatively, if the scheme had to be abandoned, to return the donations to the givers. To the April number Mr. de Lara himself contributed a stirring appeal "to all those who are interested in dramatic music and who are anxious to prove to the world that England can to-day hold her own in opera"; and he offered, if the readers of THE GRAMOPHONE raised the sum of £4,000, to devote a box in the Opera House in perpetuity to THE GRAMOPHONE "to signify my appreciation of the collective effort."

In the last number we took into account the various other schemes which were converging, like Mr. de Lara's scheme, upon this object of a permanent opera with its home in London; and we argued that the times are ripe for the Government to take the matter in hand and "to provide the unifying impulse to achievement." Since that was written the dazzling "return to gold coinage" at Covent Garden has proved that London may soon regain its pre-war position as the great testing-ground of international opera; the B.N.O.C. has been at Golders Green attracting pilgrims from all over London; the Old Vic, with its new stage, has achieved new triumphs; and the Carl Rosa Opera Company having a most successful season at the Lyceum.

Surveying these symptoms and feeling that the finest performances of opera all the year round, with really cheap seats for all who want to hear them, are not an impracticable dream but a definite probability *if we all, individually as well as collectively, make the necessary gesture of acclamation at once, all together*, we are frankly rather ashamed to give so short a list of subscribers up to the date of going to press. Since it is so short, it reflects all the more credit on those who have "made the gesture." Why so few? Has the matter been inadequately presented to you? Are you too lazy to send your pound? Can you honestly not afford it? Do you not quite trust the promise of THE GRAMOPHONE and of Mr. de Lara that you will get it back intact if the scheme comes to nothing? Or are you really absolutely indifferent or even hostile to any attempt to build a permanent home for opera on democratic lines in London?

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## OUR COMPETITION

THIS competition, started in the March number in order to increase the circulation of THE GRAMOPHONE, will close on August 31st. Money which would otherwise be spent in advertising is offered to our present readers in return for their active help in achieving what should be the object of all—more readers, more varied comment and information, more influence, more power.

### What you have to do

Write to THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Frith Street, London, W. 1; for some Subscription Order Forms—twenty, fifty, a hundred—as many as you think you can profitably use.

When you get them write your name—or, if you are a dealer, stamp the name of your firm—in the left-hand corner of each, after the words "Introduced by . . ." Then distribute them. Give them to people, post them to friends, post them to strangers. Persuade, cajole or bully them till they fill in the form and pay a year's subscription.

The Order Form, when filled in, should either be sent to THE GRAMOPHONE or else given to the nearest newsagent or dealer (who should be asked to forward it to 58, Frith Street, for identification); but be sure that your name is in the left-hand corner if you want credit for the recruit.

The prizes are divided into two groups:—

### I. FOR DEALERS

- 1st Prize, TWENTY-FIVE POUNDS
- 2nd Prize, SEVEN POUNDS
- 3rd Prize, THREE POUNDS

[NOTE.—Subscription Order Forms completed must be forwarded to 58, Frith Street, W. 1, to be checked and returned.]

### II. FOR INDIVIDUAL READERS

#### First Prize:

- (a) TEN POUNDS.
- (b) An E.M.G. portable gramophone, given by Mr. E. M. Ginn.
- (c) A "Sesame" cabinet, model O, given by Messrs. Boumphrey, Arundel and Co.
- (d) An "Astra" No. 4 sound-box or other "Astra" proprietary goods to the retail value of Two Guineas, given by the Gramophone Exchange.
- (e) Beethoven's *Choral Symphony* in an album, given by the Gramophone Co., Ltd.
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- (a) THREE POUNDS.
- (b) An "Astra" No. 2 sound-box or other "Astra" proprietary goods to the retail value of One Guinea, given by the Gramophone Exchange.
- (c) Bound volume of miniature scores of Beethoven's string quartets, given by Messrs. Goodwin and Tabb (1924), Ltd.

#### Third Prize:

- (a) TWO POUNDS.
- (b) "Astra" proprietary goods to the retail value of Half a Guinea, given by the Gramophone Exchange.

To every reader who gets TWENTY new subscribers—  
THIRTY SHILLINGS' WORTH OF RECORDS  
(reader's choice).

To every reader who gets TEN new subscribers—  
A copy of "GRAMOPHONE NIGHTS," with the Editor's autograph.

The Editor's decision in all cases will be final.



# National Gramophonic Society Notes

[All communications should be addressed to the Secretary, N.G.S., 58, Frith Street, London, W.1.]

For particulars of the Society see p. xxv.

## The Next Records

The Mozart *Oboe Quartet* and the Beethoven *First Rasoumovsky* have been recorded, but not yet passed by the Advisory Committee. The former work was found by Mr. Spencer Dyke to be more conveniently divisible for 10in. than for 12in. records, occupying five sides; and the sixth was given to a beautiful cantata by Bach for oboe and string quartet. These three 10in. records, if passed for distribution, will be reckoned as the equivalent of two 12in.

\* \* \*

## Acknowledgment

For the photograph of the Spencer Dyke String Quartet on the opposite page we are indebted to the courtesy of our contemporary, *The Strail*.

\* \* \*

## Another Quartet

Orlando Gibbons died on June 5th, 1625, at Canterbury, and his tercentenary is marked by an excellent article by Mr. J. A. Fuller-Maitland in the May number of *The Chesterian*. We are celebrating it in another way. The Music Society Quartet, under M. André Mangeot, has just recorded four of his "fantazies"—perhaps the earliest of his compositions—each of them in three parts (violin, viola and 'cello or else two violins and 'cello); and by way of contrast two of the most popular examples of Eugène Goossens, *By the Tarn* and *Jack 'o' Lantern*. These will make altogether one 12in. and one 10in. record. If we may judge by the invariably happy impression which these little pieces have made on English and Continental audiences, we need not doubt whether they will be acceptable to members as stop-gaps in the programme of larger works. But they have not yet been heard by the Advisory Committee, so it is premature to discuss the issuing of the records.

\* \* \*

## Comments

"The records are excellent, with the exception of the Schubert. The piano recording is ridiculous... the general playing of the trio has not the refinement or general expression, especially time inflexion, of the others, which are certainly fine and beautifully played. I trust that we shall have no works of such length with an important part unheard except as caricature."—F. W. V., Handley, Blackpool.

"The Schubert trio is wonderful, especially the piano."—M. Blundell, Wellington College.

"These records are a credit to both the players and the makers. They are the best argument in favour of a membership in the Society that I know of."—Donald McKay, Toronto, Canada.

\* \* \*

## A Letter from Japan

The following letter has so enchanting an air of friendliness and so magically fresh a handling of our language that we hope fellow-members will like to read it in its original form and that the author himself will accept our sincere thanks for his use of "broken and poor English":—

31st March, 1925.

Messrs. National Gramophonic Society, Ogigayatsu, Kamakura,  
London, England. Kanagawaken, Japan.

Dear Sir,

I thanks for your kind letter dated 5th Feb., then according to your letter, today I send you £3 10s. by the postal money order which you will receive directly from your post office, so please enlist me as a member of your Society, and send me your records from first issued one, and when you need more instalment or the sum which inadequacy to send the records to remote Japan, whenever I will send more, so please write me. I wanted such as your society, since long ago and now I found it, I am very very glad that your society kindly invited me. I am now in anxiety

about the members of the thousand were full before this letter to reach you.

I have almost all the Orchestral, Chamber Music and Vocal Music records of Columbia and H.M.V. (Both British and American) Aeolian Vocalion, Polydor (ex-musica, D.C.) and few French H.M.V., but those records were purchased in Japan during past 10 years with very difficulty and constantly eagerness.

In Japan the gramophone were very popularized recently to all Japanese from bourgeoisie and proletaire. (such poor and low class people enjoyed the records of native Song or historical recitation by the very cheap machine, some of which were the machine turned by the hand to play the record from beginning to end without spring motor, you think curious!) Among the Foreign Records the Victor were most popular next Columbia, Polydor etc. British Columbia and H.M.V. Records could buy after four or five months after the issue in your country, so the British music were widely known among Japanese such the Messrs. Holst's "Planet" Suite, Vaughan Williams's "London Symphony" Bridge's "Sea" and about the conductor Messrs. Sir Henry J. Wood (whom my most respecter) Goossens, Coates, Harty. But most all Japanese gramophonist were liked the classical music, such as Bach, Beethoven etc., Professional musician used the records as teacher or pedagogue, so the concert programme almost same the famous recorded music at the every times. In Tokyo, Osaka, such a great city always the record concert were held.

I am very proud when I receive your records, I intend to hold the concert by your valuable records for to hear and demonstrate Japanese Gramophone lovers. I think only First member of Japanese in your society, that is my honor. I think that is me about the article "The Gramophone" March numbers, page 380, "New members."

Recently 100% Luxury Tax imposed to the gramophone and record, so the Foreign Record price were very high and more the great damage to gramophone lovers, than the earthquake disaster, because the only way to hear the good and perfect performance of Foreign Classical and Modern Music were by the records in this country.

Owing to the Tax, gramophone merchants and lovers both now in bad condition.

There is none the musical periodicals especially to Gramophone in Japan, except one or two the trade reviews.

Victor Artist; Elman, Zimbalist, Heifetz, Kreisler, Schuman Heink. Columbia Artist; Godowsky, Parlow came to Japan during last few years, all they were received hearty welcome and succeed their concerts, (nevertheless the high admission) the cause of success were greatly owing to their records which wide spread among Japanese before they came, so if the artist who do not make gramophone Records come to Japan, his or her concert will be unsuccessful. Gramophone were essential and prominent factors in Japanese musical world.

I wish to have the honor to hear for you the Records of the ancient Japanese Royal Chamber Music which played by the instrumental Quartet, Quintet or Octet at the feast or ceremony in Imperial Court since from the time about 500 years ago to recent time, perhaps the origin of the music was that of Ancient Chinese or Korean, this music will be take your interest in the point of queer Rhythm and wonderful melody, some of which is very resemble to the modern European composition of Debussy, Ravel, etc., Folk dance or Bamboo Flute Tune Records also interest to the composer or student of Oriental music, when if you need or wishes those one, I will gladly send them at once.

The magazine "Gramophone" is most valuable and indispensable books to me, for the full of useful articles, critic, even advertisement of Columbia, H.M.V., Gramophone, etc. (because there is no ways to know new records in every month issued, in Japan, we could not get each company's bulletin or list of month). I wish to become permanent subscriber of "Gramophone," with most enthusiasm and faithfulness.

I beg your pardon that I wrote with my broken and poor English.

Yours most faithfully,

Hajime Fukaya.





**THE SPENCER DYKE STRING QUARTET**  
(Spencer Dyke, Ernest Tomlinson, B. Patterson Parker, Edwin Quaife)



**THE MUSIC SOCIETY STRING QUARTET**  
(André Mangeot, Boris Pecker, Henry J. Besly, John Barbirolli)



# GRAMOPHONE INTERPRETATION POLICIES

By JOHN F. PORTE

THE number of orchestral masterpieces, large and small, to be found in the English catalogues of leading gramophone record companies is now sufficiently extensive to be considered as a most important factor in home musical culture in this country. If we can place modern gramophone appreciation at its best so highly, it is opportune that the policies of interpretation for recording purposes should be considered not merely by writers on music and musicians, but by the gramophone companies. The cultural sphere of the gramophone is steadily growing not only higher, but wider, and it is becoming imperative that music to be accorded a more or less permanent rendering for home use should be interpreted in each instance by the most suitable and sympathetic musician or musicians available to the respective companies. More than ever will it become necessary for the latter to have competent advisers not merely concerned with the music to be recorded, but who are able to indicate its most efficient and authoritative interpreters. I would even urge that interpretation policy should rest almost solely on the advice of a disinterested musical expert. Many artistes achieve reputations as interpreters of certain composers or certain styles of music, but they often fancy things outside their real scope. Now, however much they like to do this latter in public, they should not be encouraged to make gramophone records of it; only the best interpretations are required in this form, for there is so much to be done. For instance, if Galli-Curci wanted to sing Wagnerian music in public, that would be her business; but if she suggested it for gramophone recording the critical musical adviser's business would be to prevent such a waste of time and money and, what is important, the cultural risk of offering the gramophone public a false or inadequate interpretation. The instance given is an exaggerated one in order to make my theme clear. Again, some artistes may not have a special reputation for interpreting certain composers, but there is always some kind of music which is beyond their sympathetic rendering. The fearless musical expert advising a gramophone recording committee would urge, say, that Paderevski should not record Beethoven, Lamond not Chopin, and Cortôt not Schumann, while they could be so inestimably valuable in Liszt, Beethoven, and French music respectively.

The big gramophone recording companies are by this time not, of course, insensible to the question

of the right man for a particular kind of music, and I shall endeavour to show both the happy and the unhappy interpretative arrangements for recorded orchestral masterpieces. The root theme of this article naturally embraces all aspects of musical art, and treatment of it in full would require a very large amount of space. There could then be special subject experts; Mr. Herman Klein, for instance, could very well continue to indicate the best artistes for certain vocal excerpts. I shall have to confine my review to orchestral masterpieces. The latest musical recruit soon gets to know that Pächmann stands for Chopin, Lamond for Beethoven, Gerhardt for German *lieder*, etc., but conductors of the symphony orchestra should be studied as carefully. Their instrument is the highest vehicle of musical expression, and through them we sometimes get a totally false impression of a great composer's orchestral work. Even gramophone enthusiasts are not all yet educated in orchestral interpretation. When one hears of a purchaser jubilant because he has bought a Mozart symphony for two or three shillings a record cheaper than the prices of other companies, excusing the fact that his saving has given him an orchestra and conductor neither of which have any particular reputation, then that purchaser's jubilation betrays a serious lack of musical discrimination. Probably the purchaser prides himself on discrimination in his choice of music, but he seems badly unconscious of having none with regard to the interpretation. Speaking frankly, I cannot consider Vocalion orchestral records, not only because at present they have no famous conductors, but because the playing is poor. The Symphony Orchestra of H.M.V. fame is no known body, but authoritative conductors have shown it to be composed of first-class orchestral players. Parlophone records are cheap and give first-rate continental orchestras and conductors, but the English pressings seem very poor quality. The latter point, however, is sometimes worth ignoring for the sake of the former.

A review of the interpretations of some famous works follows. The choice of conductors available to the companies is taken into consideration.

## COLUMBIA.

(1) Sir HENRY J. WOOD.—Wood has so much to do that he can be given anything, but his orchestra never seems finished as regards precision. His Tchaikovsky *Pathétique* and Franck *D minor* symphonies are amiable and personal without being



specially authoritative. His Bach concerto with Harriet Cohen is steady; both conductor and solo pianist are good Bach performers, and the former's strings alone are incidentally the best aspect of his orchestra. His *Enigma* variations are very good; I always thought Sir Henry was a better Elgar conductor than is generally imagined.

(2) FELIX WEINGARTNER.—It was enterprising of Columbia to secure Weingartner for classical symphonies, for it was here that his reputation lay. We have lately suspected that his classicism is a mere stodgy outlook derived from the old-fashioned type of Kappelmeister in Germany. Weingartner takes five discs for Beethoven's seventh and four for the eighth, and in each case the last disc has one side devoted to poor stuff composed by the conductor. The seventh is well rendered, but the eighth is too ponderous. Dr. Weissmann on Parlophone shows us, complete on three discs only, a better Beethoven eighth. Weingartner gets through the Mozart *E flat* symphony, but Hamilton Harty might have been given a chance with the Brahms No. 1.

(3) Dr. RICHARD STRAUSS.—There is no disputing that Strauss is the finest conductor of his own works, but he has only four records in the Columbia list. *Don Juan* is not quite complete. Albert Coates and Ed. Moerike have done it on H.M.V. and Parlophone respectively. Dr. Strauss recorded the *Dance of the Seven Veils* from his *Salomé*, but so, lately, has Albert Coates for H.M.V. The latter has been closely associated with the opera, so that his rendering is authoritative, and the recording is later and better.

(4) Sir THOMAS BEECHAM.—What a pity he has not recorded lately! He is good in all his records, although they are mostly so cut. I had to dispose of his rendering of *Prince Igor Danse*, No. 17, after Albert Coates made a fuller and more vital version with chorus in Russian for H.M.V., but the *Prince Igor March* and excerpt from *Antar* (Rimsky-Korsakoff) have not yet been challenged by a closer authority.

(5) ALBERT COATES.—Coates made some big Columbia items before he went over to H.M.V., but the recordings do not seem to do him justice. The best is his last (L 1429), a vivid and picturesque bit of *Scheherazade*.

(6) HAMILTON HARTY.—I find little in this conductor that is inspiring, although his permanent post with the Hallé Orchestra gives him a chance of rivalling great continental conductors. His *Water Music* records are good, but the *New World* Symphony is done better, even in a cut version, by H.M.V. No one could keep his *Cog d'Or* wedding procession if the rhythmic Russian version, on the third of the *Cog d'Or* complete ballet records, by Albert Coates (H.M.V. D 734) is heard. Harty is also out of

touch with the German flavour of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (R. Strauss). Substituting the Symphony Orchestra for the Hallé, he gets a very beautiful rendering of the Good Friday music from *Parsifal*.

(7) BRUNO WALTER.—This conductor is fine in Strauss' *Death and Transfiguration*, not being so frenzied as Coates on H.M.V.

Gustav Holst directs the orchestra quite efficiently in his own music. The versatile Eugene Goossens has made some excellent dark blue label records.

#### H.M.V.

(8) RHENÉ BATON.—The issue of Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique*, played by a famous French orchestra and conductor, took H.M.V. right out of sight of all other recording companies. Here was interpretation policy carried to its highest point. We are hardly likely to hear better performances in England, for Berlioz especially needs a French rendering to show him as he really was.

(9) ALBERT COATES.—An Anglo-Russian genius, and the most distinctive conducting acquisition of the Gramophone Company. He made the great Wagnerian series and Beethoven's ninth symphony possible, and gave the finest and most authoritative recordings of Russian music. His Strauss tone-poems are more energetic than authoritative, but I do not think the alternative choices of Ronald or even Goossens could have made them any better; *Till Eulenspiegel* is the best. I think Goossens would have made Ravel's *Mother Goose* more interesting as he has a very keen appreciation of modern orchestral works.

Why was Coates not given Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*? He is the man who can get the last ounce out of this composer as is proved in the *E minor* symphony and *Francesca de Rimini* records. Sir Landon Ronald's version is good, but he should have had Mozart's *Jupiter* symphony, which was done by Coates. Clearly, each conductor got his wrong symphony!

(10) EUGENE GOOSSENS.—We should get more records of this remarkably versatile conductor. All he does, from Bach to Puccini and Stravinsky, is well done. I would only transfer his Scriabin and Rimsky-Korsakoff records (even the excellent *La Nuit de Noël*) to Albert Coates because the latter knows more about Russian music than anybody else recording. He is also better in the Wagnerian series than the few done by Goossens. Otherwise we can all wish the latter had a larger general list. He is very fine in Beethoven's *Emperor* concerto and would have done well in the fifth symphony. Of Stravinsky, Goossens does *Petrouchka* and Coates *The Fire Bird*. I would change neither rendering, for the comparison is so good to both.



(11) Sir LANDON RONALD.—This official of the Gramophone Company, Ltd., has a very long list, many of which should, as they require renewing, be made over to Goossens or Coates. Sir Landon is very fine in the Schubert *Unfinished*, Brahms No. 2, and Dvorák *New World* symphonies because these need an efficient, but not too vivid a conductor. He should have taken Mozart's *Jupiter* symphony from Albert Coates and given him Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* in exchange. Coates happily got the Tchaikovsky fifth, although it is known that Sir Landon is fond of it. The *Tristan* preludes and *Liebestod*, *Entry of the Gods (Rhinegold)*, and *Siegfried's Funeral March*, should be re-recorded by Coates for his Wagnerian series.

I should also be interested in a less stodgy performance of Tchaikovsky's *Casse Noisette* suite, 1812 *Overture*, and *Capriccio Italien*; here again, why not by the Anglo-Russian, Albert Coates?

Sir Landon Ronald is, unfortunately, not represented in his greatest rôle—that of an Elgar conductor. It may look nice to have Sir Edward Elgar, O.M., on the active conducting list of H.M.V., but as he happens to be a great master and genius in composition, his works should be interpreted for the gramophone by a recognised exponent. This latter is present all the time in Sir Landon Ronald and yet no one has the foresight to make use of the opportunity. Sir Landon should certainly have conducted at least the *Enigma* variations and the work which he has long championed—the second *Symphony in E flat*, and, in these recordings, it would have been a graceful and appreciative act on the part of the composer to insist on handing the baton to Sir Landon.

JOHN F. PORTE.

## Notes on Mr. Porte's Article

(1) I disagree about the strings in the Bach concerto. But perhaps we should blame the recording rather than the conductor. I disagree entirely about the *Enigma Variations*, which I think are poor compared with the H.M.V. version.

(2) I disagree entirely about the comparative merits of the 7th and 8th symphonies. The 8th seems to me infinitely better, and I prefer it to the Parlophone version. I agree that the Mozart is dull conducting. After Toscanini's Victor version of the last two movements these are tame indeed.

(3) I quite agree with these comments.

(4) We all hope that Sir Thomas Beecham will soon appear on the New Columbia process.

(6) I much prefer Harty's *New World Symphony* to the H.M.V. version. I think that Mr. Porte does this conductor less than justice.

(7) There is a very great deal more than efficiency in Holst's conducting of *The Planets*. The recording, with the exception of *Jupiter*, which was the first issued, is remarkable. But I am bound to admit that very few gramophones do justice to *The Planets*. For instance, the Xylophones in *Uranus* usually sound as if somebody was picking his teeth in a corner of the room, but they *can* be got splendidly.

(8) I thoroughly agree with Mr. Porte in his praise of these superb records, but I cannot agree that Berlioz requires a French conductor. I would back Albert Coates to give a better rendering of this than anybody.

(9) I agree with every word that Mr. Porte says here.

(10) I must protest that the Goossens records of Wagner are just as good as those of Coates. Goossens is really a marvel. Every single one of his orchestral records done by Columbia and H.M.V. is good.

(11) I really cannot agree that Coates could have improved on the *Entry of the Gods* or *The Funeral March*. I don't care for Sir Landon's conducting of Beethoven's 5th. I entirely disagree that anybody but Sir Edward Elgar should be invited to conduct his music so long as he is willing to conduct it himself. I cannot understand all this criticism of the *Enigma Variations* as conducted by him. They seem to me splendid records. Here is a good instance where fibre completely fails.

I have added these notes to Mr. Porte's extremely interesting if rather provocative article because I want to emphasise once more, for the benefit of several of our correspondents who seem to expect that all critics should agree, how easy it is for them to disagree, and how very much better it is for the public that they should. The herd instinct has landed humanity in some pretty messes, and I don't want the gramophone to be trampled underfoot in the rush for unanimity. C.M.



### Some Quotations

"Nothing that is being done by wealthy men and women to cultivate the public taste in other arts can compare with what the public is doing to cultivate its own taste in music by means of the gramophone."

"Even to-day there are many people under the impression that the only record worth listening to is one of Caruso."

"For years uneducated musical taste has been allowed to suppose that enjoyment of the piano and enjoyment of music were synonymous. For years every note of music has had to be translated into terms of the piano. It would be as reasonable to expect young people to begin English verse by translating it into Latin elegiacs as to expect that they will enjoy music by hearing it only through the piano."

"No secrets are more strictly guarded than those of the recording room."

"We are getting splendid music and we are getting better recording every month; but the instruments themselves are still twenty years behind the recording rooms."

An excellent report of the Editor's paper, read before the Musical Association, appeared in the *Musical News and Herald* of May 2nd.



# Analytical Notes and First Reviews

## STRAUSS' "HELDENLEBEN"

**PARLOPHONE.**—E.10306, 7, 8, 9, 10 (five 12in., 4s. 6d. each).—

**Opera House Orchestra**, conducted by E. Moerike: *Ein Heldenleben* (A Hero's Life) (R. Strauss).

This work, of heroic proportions, is a big undertaking for the gramophone. It is the composer's fortieth work, and comes quickly after *Don Quixote*, that marvellously minute and extremely clever depiction of romance. *Ein Heldenleben* was written in 1899, and was first heard in London three years later, under the composer. It is impossible, without music type, to indicate where all the themes come, or to indicate the ingenuities of their use. It will be as well to mention the main lines of the work's "programme," and point out a few leading themes.

*First Side.*—An opening melody, on the grand scale, presents the hero, whose godlike step is suggested in the wide leaps of the first bar, and in the free, broadly-flowing movement of the melody. Two or three other themes come on this side, most of them more smooth in character than the first. One, that comes down by step, with a graceful curve, is heard about an inch from the start. The shape of another (not its actual first appearance) can be remembered by the fact of its being heard, partially, near the end of the first side, with rests after each patterning.

*Second Side.*—"The enemies" of the hero are heard—busybody bustlings, mean yapping, as of curs. The heroic style is resumed (the chattering being routed for the moment), and the solo violin takes up a major-key tune, high up, which represents the heroine, we may say. It resembles, to some extent, in its general curves, fragments of the various "hero" themes already heard—symbolising, perhaps, the affinity with the hero. The soloist has a good deal of free, recitative-like work during the remainder of this side and part of the next. The orchestra supports with a word or two now and then, and, just past the middle of *Side Two* has, in horns and low strings, a climbing short melody, with a rise of a fourth at the start. In *Side Three* comes a new theme, also beginning with the leap of a fourth. We first hear fragments of the opening of this, which the violin interrupts, and then, a little past the middle of the side, the full melody, that has a note of romantic passion in it. This is continued into *Side Four*, in peaceful mood—a very charming section of the work, with wood-wind and horns giving a delightful atmosphere of happiness and security. Just at the end of this side the voices of the antagonists are raised again, but they are unable to disturb the scene, which ends in peace.

*Side Five* starts with a trumpet call. Here the hero is seen in battle. It is unnecessary to analyse very minutely here. This music might be compared with Holst's *Mars in The Planets*. Strauss gives us more the feeling of the giant rejoicing in his strength, rather than the horror of war. The various "hero" themes are to be detected here and there. The battle continues through *Side Six*, concluding with a suggestion of the hero triumphant.

In *Side Seven* the hero's "Works of Peace" are celebrated, and here Strauss delicately hints at the identity of his hero by using quotations from his own works! There are tunes from *Don Juan*, *Death and Transfiguration*, and other earlier compositions, which those who have heard records of these works will recognise, after a little study of these discs. The final section shows the hero giving up worldly vanities and preparing for his latter end. After some preparation on *Side Nine* (long sustained chords, with violin interjections aloft and a gentle horn call below) the main theme of the last section is heard (about an inch from the end of this side). This subject had been suggested in a fragmentary melody in the "Works of Peace" section. At the opening of *Side Ten* there is a momentary increase of excitement, but the placid melody continues on its pure and elevated way, freed from earthly strife.

The personal note in this work is evident. The identification of the hero with the composer is clear, though it has been suggested that a more metaphysical heroism is depicted—that which "aspires through effort and renouncement to the elevation of the soul." Have it as you will. There is plenty of interest and beauty in the music. The battle, often rather horrific in the concert-

room, is mild enough on the gramophone—or is it merely that, since we are now accustomed to terrific sounds, this war-music of Strauss has lost some of its sting? Of course, the gramophone cannot reproduce so big a volume of tone satisfactorily, however good the playing and recording. The Parlophone performance is almost first rate—quite so in parts. I find the wood-wind just a trifle below par in vitality at times, and a little shrill in strenuous passages. The strings might have had rather more power, on high notes; but there is good body in the playing as a whole, and a fair amount of delicacy in the gentler portions of the work. Altogether, a good successor to the last few months' Parlophone Strauss. K. K.

## BEETHOVEN'S FOURTH AND FIFTH

**PARLOPHONE.**—E.10280-E.10283 (four 12in., 4s. 6d. each; in album, £1 1s.).—**Opera House Orchestra**, conducted by Dr. Weissmann: *Symphony in B flat, Op. 60* (Beethoven).

E.10284-E.10287 (four 12in., 4s. 6d. each; in album, £1 1s.).

—**Opera House Orchestra**, conducted by Dr. Weissmann: *Symphony in C minor, Op. 67*.

I hear that the Parlophone Company have undertaken to record all the nine Beethoven symphonies. If this is true we shall all be very grateful to them. Four or five of these great works have already been reproduced by one company or another, but we want the whole lot; they are as essential to the gramophonist's library as a complete edition of Shakespeare to the shelves of the literary connoisseur. How many records will be required for the enterprise I cannot say; the main body of them has not reached me. But I have encountered a strong advance-guard in the shape of the fourth and fifth symphonies. The best plan, I think, will be to deal with these in their place in a comprehensive review of the whole series. At present I will only say that I have heard them both and am feeling just a little anxious. It is, indeed, satisfactory to find that the performance is thoroughly capable and that there are no cuts anywhere (apart from a few repeats which most of us can spare). But there are certain respects in which the recording falls short of the ideal. The chief weakness is in the wood-wind, which is not nearly loud enough to balance the excellent strings; in places where the interest lies in a wind solo or a dialogue between various wind instruments, with a string accompaniment, the obliteration of the principal feature (for often it almost amounts to that) results in a serious misrepresentation of Beethoven's intentions. The flute, in particular, is hardly ever able to come through. This criticism applies principally to the fourth symphony; it has been largely remedied in the fifth. But even here the standard is not up to that of the H.M.V. records; the balance is not so good, the detail not so clear, and the brass slightly rougher. There are other aspects, it is true, in which the Parlophone version is superior to its rival, but I certainly prefer the H.M.V. edition on the whole. Dr. Weissmann seems to me to regard Beethoven rather too much as an institution and too little as a man, a fault of which no one can accuse Sir Landon Ronald and the Albert Hall Orchestra. Possibly this is a personal prejudice, but I fancy most people will agree with me.

I look forward to the remaining symphonies with keen anticipation. The two I have heard have only just failed to be very good; the others, perhaps, will succeed. But I am in some doubt as to how readers of THE GRAMOPHONE would wish me to deal with them. After discussing the matter with the Editor I have decided to confine myself to a review of the records, leaving the music to speak for itself. Analyses would take up a lot of much-wanted space, and there are, moreover, several in existence already. But if there are readers who consider that the space would be well occupied with matter of this sort, will they send a post-card to "The Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Frith Street, Soho, London, W. 1," and say so? If the demand is sufficient I will endeavour to meet it. P. P.



## OVERTURE TO "DER FREISCHÜTZ"

**BRUNSWICK.**—5055 (12in., 8s.).—**Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by Henri Verbruggen: **Freischütz Overture** (Weber).

*Der Freischütz* is the most famous of all Weber's overtures; clear in structure, cleverly orchestrated, and replete with melody, it represents his peculiar genius at its very best. It is written in the French form—a slow movement followed by a quick one. The opening of the slow movement consists of unison passages to which an almost threatening character is given by the use of the very low notes of the clarinet—a favourite effect of the composer's. Soon a lovely tune on the horns enters bringing with it all the freshness and magic of the forest in which the scene of the drama is laid. A brief but ominous episode\* with string tremolos and a wailing 'cello solo, suggestive of the supernatural element in the play, leads to the *Allegro*.

Here the minor key and the stormy character of the first subject continue for a while the mood of uneasiness which is finally dissipated (towards the end of *side one*) by the clarinet singing a lovely soothing melody in the major. This is quickly followed by the buoyant tune that forms the climax of the well-known air *Leise, Leise*, and which is used here as the second subject. *Side two* contains the development. This is very short; low, threatening notes on the trombones soon bring back the restless first subject. This is recapitulated and then once more the dark shadow of evil drifts across the score (as at the end of the slow movement). It is swept away, however, by a triumphant major chord for the full orchestra, and the radiant second subject colours all the few remaining pages of the overture.

Apart from a short cut (bars 25 to 42) the Brunswick record is complete and very satisfactory. The long horn passage near the beginning is beautifully played, and the brass throughout is effective without being unduly rough or obtrusive; the trombones in the early part of *side two* are particularly good. The problem of balance has been most successfully solved and the solos come out well even on the softest instruments. Whether the record as a whole is as good as the H.M.V. one (which is quite complete) I must leave to my readers to decide. But it is undoubtedly a fine achievement.

## SIEGFRIED IDYLL

**VOCALION.**—K.05157, 05158 (two 12in., 9s.).—**Modern Clarinet Orchestra**, conducted by Stanley Chapple: **Siegfried Idyll** (Wagner).

On June 6th, 1869, a son was born to Wagner. The event occurred at a time when the composer was busy with the music of his opera, *Siegfried*, and it was after the hero of that work that the boy was named. The following year witnessed the composition of the *Siegfried Idyll*, which was written to be a birthday tribute to his wife, Cosima, Liszt's daughter and the child's mother. For its performance Wagner invited to his house a number of the most brilliant musicians of the day. They came—with their instruments—and Cosima received such a birthday gift as can have fallen to the lot of few women. The score is a very small one—conditions did not permit of a grandiose display of enormous forces, nor was the occasion suitable—and it provides a unique example of the fullness and variety that the composer could obtain from a body of players considerably smaller than that employed by Beethoven for most of his orchestral works. The earth-shaker has laid aside his thunderbolts and revealed himself in a mood of intimate tenderness that is as irresistible as his lightning.

Most of the subject-matter is taken, appropriately enough, from the love scene in the Third Act of *Siegfried*. The opening melody is that of the song in which Brünnhilde sings of her dawning love for Siegfried. This is followed by another containing a reference to the *Freia motif*. The next tune, a tender cradle song with all the dewy fragrance of dawn (*side two* of the record), is not a quotation from any of Wagner's works, but he returns to *Siegfried* a little later (towards the end of *side two*) when the wind creeps in with a new thought derived from another part of the song of Brünnhilde already referred to. This is worked up to a climax in *side three*, after which we get yet another *motif* (that of the

rapturous duet in which at the very end of the opera Siegfried and Brünnhilde celebrate their love) played on the horn. These ideas form the main constituents of the work, although others are alluded to as well, notably the *Slumber motif*. I need add nothing further in the way of analysis except that *side three* contains a second climax beyond the one already mentioned, and *side four* consists of a rather free recapitulation.

My references have all been to the new *Vocalion* records. But the *Siegfried Idyll* has also been recorded by H.M.V. and Columbia. I have listened recently to all three versions. All are complete and all have much to recommend them. The Columbia records are not a recent issue, I fancy; at any rate, the surface here compares very unfavourably with what the company can do to-day. The detail is clear, however, and the rendering most musicianly. The conductor is Albert Coates, who is also responsible for the H.M.V. production. Here we have a good balance and the string tone is first rate; the wind, too, is good as a whole, though the horns are curiously colourless at time. But I have no hesitation in recommending the *Vocalion* version as the best, quite apart from any question of price. Whether the results are due to their employing, as the bulletin tells us, exactly the same number of players as took part in the original performance I cannot say, but certainly every feature of the score comes out with extraordinary plainness. Soft melodies on the horns are easily followed, even when there are several other instruments playing above them, and the clarinet *arpeggio* on page 25 of the miniature score is a marvel of clearness and successful balance. These are only two small merits in a rendering that abounds with felicities and has the additional advantage of an excellent surface.

The breaks between the records in the *Vocalion* version are as follows: (1) page 15, bar 2; (2) page 27, bar 7, and (3) page 44, bar 3. The other two companies make the last break at the very end of page 46; otherwise they have used the same divisions. There is nothing objectionable in any of these plans.

## BRUNSWICK

(May Issues.)

50054 (12in., 8s.).—**Elisabeth Rethberg** (soprano): **La Mamma Morta** from **Andrea Chénier** (Giordano) and **Mi chiamo Mimi** from **La Bohème** (Puccini). See page 5.

50055 (12in., 8s.).—**Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra**: **Freischütz Overture** (Wagner).

15078 (10in., 5s. 6d.).—**Giuseppe Danise** (baritone): **Noche Serena** and **Linda Mia**, folk songs.

15094 (10in., 5s. 6d.).—**Elly Ney** (piano): **Feux d'Artifices** (Debussy) and **Valse Petite** (Carreño).

10154 (10in., 4s. 6d.).—**Marie Morisey** (contralto): **The Rosary** (Nevin) and **Cradle Song** (MacFadyen).

10156 (10in., 4s. 6d.).—**Claire Dux** (soprano): **Ständchen** (Strauss-von Schack) and **Maria's Wiegenlied** (Reger). (See translation, p. 51.)

The Brunswick list, besides showing a welcome increase in length, contains several interesting features, a record by Elisabeth Rethberg (which I have left to Mr. Klein to deal with), and another of the *Freischütz Overture* (to which I have devoted a paragraph above) among them. Two songs by Claire Dux are also sure of a welcome; I record my opinion of these below. The general level of the recording is very fair, though the surface noise is rather troublesome occasionally.

*Giuseppe Danise*.—This singer calls himself a baritone and has a baritone range; but his voice takes on a tenor quality at times. Not that this is unpleasant; his singing is most enjoyable and so are his songs. *Noche Serena* has a pleasant tune and *Linda Mia*, though it starts rather conventionally, has a most effective change to the major which Danise treats effectively. The accompaniment of both songs shows plenty of local colour in the choice of the instruments used, but the result is quite artistic and unobtrusive. Not great music this, but then no one tries to make it appear great, and we can enjoy it at our ease.

*Elly Ney*.—Debussy's *Feux d'Artifices* is brilliantly played, even if there is a slight lack of clearness here and there. A certain amount of hardness in the tone is legitimate in a piece called *Fireworks*, though it rather emphasises the characteristic deficiencies of all piano recording. I think, indeed, that it was an unwise piece

\* This is "cut" in the Brunswick record.



# BELTONA

Regd.

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## June, 1925.

THE June Supplement of Beltona Records will long be remembered as one of the strongest lists ever issued. A few of our Singers are again giving you of their best: if you have not yet heard Elliot Dobie there is a treat in store for you (No. 763): Ethel Kemish is also heard in beautiful voice on record No. 766. Herbert Thorpe deserves special mention for his glorious record (12", No. 5017). Every record this month deserves its place in the list: every one is a seller: "Gee-gee, put your Tongue out" is the great chorus song that everybody will shortly be singing. If you cannot get Beltonas from your dealer, write to us.

12 inch.	4/- each.	10 inch.	2/6 each.
No.	TITLE.	No.	TITLE.
5017.	<b>The Flower Song, "Carmen"</b> (Bizet). <b>On with the Motley, "I Pagliacci"</b> (Leoncavallo). Sung by Herbert Thorpe (Tenor) with Orch. (In English.)	767.	<b>Because</b> (Guy d'Hardelot). (Piano Accompt.) <b>Absent</b> (Metcalf). (Unacc.) Sung by The Beltona Male Voice Quartette.
769.	<b>Rose-Marie, from "Rose-Marie"</b> (Frml). Adel... (Spuria) Sung by Harry Drummond (Baritone) with Orch.	768.	<b>May Breezes</b> (Leslie). <b>Wood Nymphs</b> (Eric Coates). Played by The Sutherland Orchestra.
761.	<b>"No, No, Nanette" Selection, Part I</b> (Youmans). <b>"No, No, Nanette" Selection, Part II</b> (Youmans). Played by The Sutherland Orchestra.	769.	<b>The Dustman's Picnic</b> (Gammeyer). <b>Gallant Middies</b> (Gammeyer). Banjo Duets by Arnold Abbott and Walter Firmin.
762.	<b>"Rose-Marie" Selection, Part I</b> (Frml). <b>"Rose-Marie Selection," Part II</b> (Frml). Played by The Sutherland Orchestra.	770.	<b>Tea for Two, "No, No, Nanette"</b> (Foxtrot). <b>Close in my Arms</b> (Waltz). Played by The Avenue Dance Orchestra.
763.	<b>I am a Roamer</b> (Mendelssohn). <b>King Charles</b> (Maude V. White). Sung by Elliot Dobie (Bass) with Piano Accompt.	771.	<b>Oh! Darling do say Yes</b> (Foxtrot). <b>Leander, "Katja"</b> (Foxtrot, Vocal Chorus). Played by The Premier Dance Orchestra.
764.	<b>I'm glad my Hert's my ain</b> (Traditional). <b>He's aye kissin' me</b> (Traditional). Sung by Margaret F. Stewart (Soprano) with Piano Accompt.	772.	<b>Alabamy Bound</b> (Foxtrot, Vocal Chorus). <b>Everybody loves my Baby</b> . Played by The Virginia Dance Orchestra.
765.	<b>The Promise</b> (T. W. Bowie). <b>Hunting Tower</b> (arr. Maxfield). Duets by Margaret F. Stewart (Soprano) and Elliot Dobie (Bass).	773.	<b>Lonely and Blue</b> (Foxtrot). <b>The only, only One</b> (Foxtrot). Played by the Palm Beach Players.
766.	<b>Before you came</b> (H. Lane Wilson). <b>Homing</b> (Teresa del Riego). Sung by Ethel Kemish (Soprano) with Piano Accompt.	774.	<b>La Java</b> (Waltz). (Yv-ain). <b>Dreams</b> (Waltz). Played by The Palm Beach Marimba Band.
		775.	<b>Gee-Gee, put your Tongue out</b> . Sung by Sid Cartwright (Baritone) with Orch. accompt. <b>Could Lloyd George do it?</b> Sung by Willie Henderson with Orch. accompt.

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to choose for the purposes of the gramophone, and I much preferred the Carreño *Valse*, where the music is less extravagant and the playing more sympathetic. By the way, the reference to the *Marseillaise* at the end of *Feux d'Artifices* is a touch that should not be missed. The recording is adequate and in the *valse* good, except for a single unexpected case of "blast" about two-thirds of the way through.

*Marie Morisey* is a singer whose voice has a satisfying richness. She also speaks her words clearly, a rare virtue among contraltos. I have never liked *The Rosary* myself, but there must be many people who differ from me, and they will find here all they can want; an emotional voice, an orchestra, a bell, and a chorus! The *Cradle Song* is harmless, though not very moving, and has a charming orchestral touch here and there. But this is none of it music for "high-brows."

*Claire Dux*.—I believe I said a month or two ago that I wished the Brunswick Company would give us some of the *Claire Dux* records that appear on their American catalogue. Well, I have got my wish, and I must confess to a feeling of disappointment. The singing has, indeed, the sense of style that we expect from a singer with *Claire Dux*' reputation; but did her tone always have that "edge" on it? The Reger song is unusually simple for the composer, but it failed to thrill me. The Strauss' *Ständchen* is more familiar and has been recorded before, notably by Selma Kurz for H.M.V. *Claire Dux* takes it very fast and in a very high key (on my instrument, with a speed of 78, it comes out as G major). This means that the high note near the end is B natural. *Claire Dux* can sing a beautiful B natural and does so, but the effort demoralises her. She holds on to it about two bars too long and then forgets herself so much as to sing notes which Strauss never wrote in the last phrase of the song—an error of pure carelessness. You can do better than this, Madam! Give us another record, one that is worthy of you!

P. P.

## COLUMBIA

(June Issues.)

- X.320 (10in., 6s.).—**Riccardo Stracciari** (baritone), with orchestra: **T'amo ben io**, from *La Wally* (Catalani) and **Gia di dicon venal**, from *La Tosca* (Puccini).
- D.1514 (10in., 5s.).—**W. H. Squire** (cello): **Songs my mother taught me** (Dvorák, arr. Grunfeld) and **Spinning Wheel** (Dunkler).
- D.1515 (10in., 5s.).—**W. Murdoch** (piano): **An den Fruhling (In the Spring)** (Grieg), **Prelude in A** (Chopin), and **Danse Nègre** (C. Scott).
- D.1516 (10in., 5s.).—**Yovanovitch Bratza** (violin, with piano): **Mélodie** (Gluck-Kreisler), and **Variations on a Theme by Corelli** (Tartini-Kreisler).
- D.1517 (10in., 5s.).—**Dora Labbette** (soprano, with string quartet): **Comin' through the rye** and **The bonnie banks o' Loch Lomond**.
- 3565 (10in., 3s.).—**Arthur Jordan** (tenor, with piano): **O let no star compare with thee** (Head) and **Eleanore** (Coleridge-Taylor).
- 3645 (10in., 3s.).—**Harold Williams** (baritone, with orchestra): **I am a Friar of Orders Grey** (Reeve) and **Simon the Cellarer** (Hatton).
- 7368 (12in., 8s. 6d.).—**Elsa Stralia**, with orchestra: **Elizabeth's Greeting from Tannhäuser** (Wagner) and **Bel raggio** from *Semiramide* (Rossini).
- L.1636 (12in., 7s. 6d.).—**Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**, conducted by **Bruno Walter**: **Siegfried's Journey to the Rhine**, from *Twilight of the Gods* (Wagner).
- L.1637 (12in., 7s. 6d.).—**The Hallé Orchestra**, conducted by **Hamilton Harty**: **Student's Festival Overture (Akademische Fest-Ouverture)** (Brahms).
- L.1638 and 1639 (12in., 7s. 6d. each).—**Lener String Quartet**: **Quartet in F, Op. 3, No. 5** (Haydn).

*La Wally* is a story of love and death in the Tyrolean Alps. The music has little distinction. This singer has a big voice that, in my instrument, comes out with a hard edge here and there, and a little emotional vibrato, in a stress, that I do not quite like. He does not make many variations of stress, but gives his words rather too even emphasis. He draws a better line in the *Tosca* extract, but still I find the tone not highly pleasing; and I doubt

if we have time for singers who cannot or will not keep their tone steady. Mr. Squire languishes quite handsomely in the arrangement of the Dvorák song. The happy little discrepancy between the piano's rhythm and that of the voice (or instrument)—a neat device of the composer—is pleasantly felt here. The cello tone is rather too even in thickness most of the time. The other piece is of the type that all cellists love—the *moto perpetuo*. It is fealty performed, with a notable purity of tonal line. There is little in the music.

Mr. Murdoch sounds a trifle thin. The highest octaves of the piano do not record too well here, though the painful tinniness of former days seems to have vanished—unlamented. The Chopin is touched gracefully, as to rhythm, though with insufficient tone. The Scott piece is a mildly exciting caper. Bratza's violin gives us something of the Greek purity of Gluck's style, in this delicate theme that soars so sweetly. At first I didn't know what Kreisler had done to the *Variations*, but about two-thirds of the way through his hand appears, in some modern chromatic decorations. This is a jolly bit of fiddling, that everybody will enjoy—high-brow and low, and, most of all, those who are not conscious of their brows at all.

I am not over-fond of most arrangements of old tunes (scarcely "Traditional," as the label will have it). Miss Labbette is quite good here, though her high notes lack colour rather notably. Voice and strings do not always accord perfectly in time. A trace of sophistication so easily creeps into the performance of these songs, and spoils one's enjoyment a little. I like *Loch Lomond* the better of these two.

Mr. Jordan does not sound very easy, tonally, at the beginning of *Eleanore*. There are many likeable elements in his voice, but the whole is not sufficiently capable of colour variation to be a fully expressive instrument. His sincerity and poise always give pleasure. The more recent song—that by Mr. Head—has no very fresh element, but skims the surface of emotion reasonably well. Clean, upstanding singing is always to be expected from Mr. Williams. He rollicks in excellent spirit as the Holy Friar, and touches off the sly humours of *Simon* with a wink and a smile in the voice, not overdoing the thing.

*Bel raggio* is about the only air from *Semiramide* that we ever hear. It is a capital example of the use of ornament as an integral part of an air—one of the qualities that must not be forgotten, when we find Italian opera of the older school palling on us. There is real expressiveness in the floridity of this song, in which *Semiramide* sings her joy at welcoming the young warrior Arsaces back to Babylon. Miss Stralia negotiates the runs comfortably, but does not carry the whole thing through with very full, long phrases. In the Wagner air she does well, except for a certain thinness at times. There is not quite the lovely bloom on the tone that some prime donne give us. Certain vowels are touched hardly.

The great panorama music of Wagner goes with a noble stride. Walter controls very steadily, and lets the lighter parts sing out in all their sweetness. The body of tone and the building up of the whole are notable. This seems to me one of the best things we have had for some time. It ranks in my mind with the *Funeral March of Siegfried*, and with the *Wedding Procession Music* from *Lohengrin*, among other works, as quite at the high-water mark of present-day recording.

The Brahms *Overture* ought to be played to anyone who thinks of this composer as a dry-as-dust. It was a happy idea of Brahms, when they were going to make him a Ph.D. at Breslau, to build an overture (that was performed, along with the very strongly contrasted "Tragic," soon after the occasion) on students' songs. There is a blend of humour and homely sentiment in these that Brahms found it easy to convey, along with a sense of his mastery of the form and material, and a delight in using the orchestra thus expressively. The first tune heard, after an introductory passage of lilting, syncopated octaves, is that known as *The stately house*, one of the songs sung at solemn festivities of students in Germany. Then, after a fair amount of development matter, *The father of his Country* comes in, in the second violins. This is a sort of national hymn of the students, sung only once a year. Another tune, *Listen to the song of songs*, is touched upon briefly, and then the jolly *Freshman's Song* enters in the bassoons, the rest of the orchestra coming in gradually. (This begins about half an inch from the end of the first side of the record.) Another tune, *What's that there on the hill?* is briefly touched upon, and a famous song, *Gaudeamus igitur* (in three-time) forms the coda.

I find the recording strongest on the wood-wind side—in the blend rather than in the balance. The strings, aloft, seem rather



weak. There is a very good feeling of climax, in the middle of the second side, and that at the finish is well sustained.

The early Haydn *Quartet* skips along in his most dainty manner, in the *First Movement*. There is certainly a touch of the peasant brush here. He is more concerned about the tune than about anything else, and the Lener leader's little habit of soloing comes not amiss. There is nothing here that calls for analysis. It is just high spirits, loosed off for anyone to catch who is in the mood.

The *Second Movement* moves with Gavotte-like grace, as in some stately measure of the Court. It is written in an unusual way for a quartet movement—as a solo with pizzicato accompaniment throughout.

The *Third Movement*, the usual minuet, is also of the Court, courtly—suave, yet with a neat accent in it. The *Trio* (middle section) is particularly neatly pointed, with a little of that dapper conventionality that brings up before us the whole atmosphere of the Court life that Haydn came later to know so well.

The *Fourth Movement* keeps up the style of the whole work, with its springing rhythms, its absence of elaborate work for the under parts, its general liveliness and care-freeness. The quartet is a consistent whole—a sort of dance suite, with nothing at all deep in it, but melodious, and suffused with a sunny feeling that makes it very charming music for the moments when one feels dull.

K. K.

## VOCALION

(May Issues.)

- A.0232 (12in., 5s. 6d.).—**John Coates** (tenor): *Come not, when I am dead* (Holbrooke) and *Sigh no more, Ladies* (Stevens, 1790). Piano acc., Berkeley Mason.
- A.0233 (12in., 5s. 6d.).—**Vladimir Rosing** (tenor): *M'appari tutt' amor* from *Marta* (Flotow) and *Cavatina* from *Romeo et Juliette* (Gounod).
- K.05167 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Roy Henderson** (baritone): *The Erl King* and *Serenade* (Schubert). Piano acc., Stanley Chapple.
- X.9560 (10in., 3s.).—**Malcolm McEachern** (bass) with the Aeolian Orchestra: *Revenge!* *Timotheus cries from Alexander's Feast* (Handel).
- K.05166 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Constance Willis** (contralto) with the Aeolian Orchestra: *Fair spring is returning* from *Samson and Delilah* (Saint-Saëns) and *Here am I in Beauty's room*, *Gavotte* from *Mignon* (Thomas).
- X.9561 (10in., 3s.).—**Olga Haley** (mezzo-soprano).—*Who is Sylvia?* (Schubert) and *A Ballroom Meeting* (Tchaikovsky). Piano acc., Ivor Newton.
- K.05168 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Jelly d'Aranyi** (violin): *Air No. 1, Andante Maestoso* from *Deux Airs Célèbres* (Purcell, arr. Lambert) and *Sarabande* and *Tambourin* from *Sonate No. 3* (Leclair). Piano acc., Ethel Hobday.
- X.9562 (10in., 3s.).—**York Bowen** (piano): *A Romp* from *Second Suite* (Bowen) and *Polichinelle* (Rachmaninoff).
- K.05157, 05158 (12in., 9s.).—**The Modern Chamber Orchestra** conducted by Stanley Chapple: *Siegfried Idyll* (Wagner).

The more I hear of the productions of the Vocalion Company the more impressed do I become by their excellence. The artistic value of the music chosen and the performance of it may be a little unequal at times, but as regards all that appertains to the science of reproduction, I submit that they have no superior and very few equals. Their combination of fine work and low price is something unique in the gramophone world.

The chief instrumental item in this month's list is the *Siegfried Idyll*, to which I have devoted a special notice. But here are some remarks on the other numbers.

**John Coates**.—This, I am convinced, is the best record John Coates has made, one of those rare discs with which familiarity could never breed contempt. I hold no brief for Holbrooke's music as a whole, but this song impressed me in spite of myself. If the writing is angular the rendering has admirably concealed the defect, and one is only conscious of a fine, dramatic conception of Tennyson's poem, splendidly realised in the performance. I was uneasy for a few moments at the beginning of *Sigh no more*, but the twinkle which my imagination detected in the singer's eye before half the first verse was over won me to a complete

sympathy with the slight liberties he has taken. His treatment of the refrain, "Hey, nonny, nonny," is absolutely delicious.

**Vladimir Rosing**.—I must quarrel with Rosing's choice of songs. As an interpreter he is magnificent in his own line, but these operatic excerpts do not suit him. The *Cavatina* does not strike me as interesting music, and the voice wobbles at times; though the singer rises finely to the climax at the end. In *M'appari* he sustains the conflict with skill and courage, but the plain fact is that he has not got the enormous voice on which the effectiveness of this kind of thing depends.

**Roy Henderson**.—Roy Henderson is justifying my hopes of him. His rendering of the *Erl-King* is as good a one as I hope to hear—and I am aware that Robert Radford has recorded it for H.M.V. The four speakers in the drama—the narrator, the father, the boy, and the *Erl-King*—are well depicted by different qualities of voice, and the general conception is complete and rhythmical. The speed is perhaps a little on the slow side and I miss that strange remoteness in the *Erl-King's* utterances and that supreme stroke at the end which perhaps only Plunket Greene can achieve. But Henderson is still young. The *Serenade* is a little, a very little, less good. For one thing the surface of my pressing is not quite perfect; for another the singer displays a slight tendency to hang on to his high notes too long. This is legitimate once or twice in a Schubert song, but it is fatal if it becomes a habit. And I am sorry that the last bars of the piano part are cut. The pianist is so good (in both songs) that he should be allowed to have his say.

**Malcolm McEachern**.—Is it really true that this famous song has not been recorded before? If it is so, the Vocalion Company have filled a serious gap in the gramophonist's repertoire. McEachern's is a fine, vigorous rendering, though his words are not always as clear as they might be. Let him give us some more Handel. By the way, there is a *da capo* marked in the score and *side one* should be repeated after *side two* if the composer's intentions are to be fully realised. The orchestra might be a little less modest at times.

**Constance Willis**.—Constance Willis is a competent singer whose diction is better than that of most contraltos. But both voice and interpretation lack variety. There is no *mezzo voce* and far too much *mezzo forte* in her record. The whole gives the impression of a lesson well learned rather than of a genuine artistic impulse; she works hard—which is good—but unfortunately she lets us know it—which is bad!

**Olga Haley**.—Here is another first-rate record! The performance of *Who is Sylvia?* is completely satisfying, that extra touch of enthusiasm at the beginning of the last verse being just what is wanted. Tchaikovsky's song (also well sung) is one of which I am very fond. The major chord at the end of a piece in the minor key is a *cliché* in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, but how full of significance is its use here!

**Jelly d'Aranyi**.—I was a little disappointed with this record, perhaps because I expect so much of Jelly d'Aranyi. Either my ear was tired or the intonation was not quite perfect once or twice. And what on earth has happened to the last bass note of the piano in the Purcell piece? It has the oddest sound. I think I should have chosen two quick numbers for the second side. After the beautiful but slow and long Purcell item I wanted something more lively than a *Sarabande*. But the *Tambourin* is delightful, and most admirably played.

**York Bowen**.—The Rachmaninoff *Polichinelle* is original and attractive; it suits York Bowen's style and he plays it well. His own *Romp* is a soundly constructed piece to which the performance again does full justice, but it is spoilt for me by the banality of the main idea. The recording is good; on my rather small gramophone there is just a suggestion of "blast" in the Rachmaninoff, but I dare say another instrument would take it comfortably.

P. P.

[NOTE.—Apologies are due to the Recording Companies, our reviewers and our readers, for a miscalculation which necessitates the holding over of many important reviews till next month: notably the admirable H.M.V. Supplement of Songs by Mr. John Goss from the WEEK-END BOOK, the reviews of Band Records, and a long list of Miscellaneous Records.—London Ed.]



## PARLOPHONE

(June Issues.)

- E.10296 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Zita Fumagalli** (soprano) with orchestra: **Un bel di vedremo** from *Madame Butterfly* (Puccini) and **Pace, pace, mio Dio** from *La Forza del Destino* (Verdi).
- E.1294 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Mary Verriotis** (soprano) with orchestra: **Ritorna Vincitor** and **I sacre nomi** from *Aida* (Verdi).
- E.10295 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Mary Verriotis**: **O Patria Mia** from *Aida* (Verdi) and **Suicidio! In questi fieri momenti** from *La Gioconda* (Ponchielli).
- E.10288 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Edward Moerike and Orchestra**: **Prelude** and **Ballet Music** from *Aida* (Verdi).
- E.10289 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Edith Lorand Orchestra**: **Fantasia** on **Boris Godounov** (Moussorgsky).
- E.10290 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Edith Lorand Orchestra**: **Ballet Suite** (Francis Popy). **Entrée, Mazurka, Pizzicato** (Valse Lente), **Largo, Finale**, and **Galop**.
- E.10297 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Emmy Bettendorf** (soprano), with orchestra: **Vissi d'arte** from *La Tosca* (Puccini), and **Si, mi chiamano Mimi** from *La Bohème* (Puccini).
- E.10293 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Mayer-Mahr Quintet**: **Trout Quintet, Theme and Variations** (Third Movement) (Schubert).
- E.10298 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Lauritz Melchior** (tenor), with orchestra: **Amfortas die Wunde** and **Es starbt der Blick** from *Parsifal* (Wagner).

The Puccini and Verdi airs of Miss Fumagalli are delivered with plenty of point, and full round tone, that only pierces a trifle on some of the more intense notes. There is emotion in the voice, of two very different kinds. Good vocal acting, this. The name of Mary Verriotis is new to me. She has an excellent dramatic conception of these airs. On the lower register she is occasionally a little coarse, but for dramatic ends, so that the effect does not jar seriously. She is a little too operatic (losing a little of the beauty of simplicity thereby) at the end of the second side of *I sacre nomi*, and her highest notes in *O patria* are not very easy. The orchestra is excellent.

The *Aida* preludial music is given very purely. In the louder portions there is a little lack of perfect balance, I feel, but the counterpoint is forcefully, if a little thickly, delivered. The Prelude is not very exciting music, but the ballet tunes and orchestration are piquant. The *Boris Fantasia* gives some idea of the characteristic Russian themes and their treatment in this powerful work. Quite a good survey of the subject-matter of the opera is obtainable from this disc. The playing is very competent, though the upper voices in the orchestra are sometimes on the light side for the basses. There is not quite the perfect blending of tone-colours that one would like. The Popy Suite is fair to middling cinema music, without the least distinction.

Emmy Bettendorf has an appealing quality of voice, and plenty of round, pearly tone to back up her full-bodied interpretations. This is the kind of singing that Puccini needs. One ought always to be conscious that a prima donna is singing. It is necessary, in order to savour this kind of art, that one should detect the odour of paint and powder, and sniff the breeze that comes over the footlights when the curtain goes up. Otherwise, the singer has warbled in vain. Rather oddly, the players cut short the second D in the first bar of the tune, making it less than a semiquaver. The piano is quite well recorded. Its trills are a little hammered, though. The chording is occasionally a trifle ragged, and there is not a great deal of subtlety in the performance. In the third variation, for instance, where the piano has the florid part, its tone might have been kept lighter. The variations, it must be allowed, are on the whole slight, and not of surpassing musical value. They will be found very agreeable recreation.

Mr. Melchior is a very loud tenor, whose voice is not well suited to this role. There is a thinness in the tone, and a certain tightness, that conspire to prevent his emotion from reaching us in full purity, when it attains any state of stress. A vibrato also does not improve his singing. He is evidently putting a lot into the part, and it is rather a pity we do not get more out of it.

K. K.

## HIS MASTER'S VOICE

(May Issues.)

(Held over from last month.)

- D.B.833 (12in., 8s. 6d.).—**Paderewski** (piano): **Impromptu in B flat major** (Schubert).
- D.B.764 (12in., 8s. 6d.).—**Suggia** ('cello): **Suite for 'Cello in C major, Prelude, and Allemande** (Bach).
- D.B.821 (12in., 8s. 6d.).—**Toti dal Monte** (soprano): **Carnival di Venezia** (Aria e Variazione) (Jules Benedict).
- D.A.680 (10in., 6s.).—**John McCormack** (tenor), with violin obbligato by **Fritz Kreisler**: **To the Children, Op. 26, No. 7** and **How fair this spot, Op. 21, No. 7** (Rachmaninoff).
- D.B.000 (12in., 8s. 6d.).—**Thibaud** (violin): **Sonata in E minor, Gigue, Menuett, and Gavotte** (F. M. Veracini, arr. J. Salmon).
- D.A.566 (10in., 6s.).—**Ezio Pinza** (bass): **Ah, del Tebro al gioso indegno, from Norma** (Bellini), and, with **L'Alessio** (tenor), **Non sai tu che d'un giusto** from *La Favorita* (Donizetti).

Repeated hearings of Paderewski's record of Schubert's *B flat Impromptu* only deepen my first impression that he has never done anything better or, it is probably nearer the truth to say, that the recording experts have never taken such an excellent likeness of him before. Unaccompanied suites for a single instrument can hardly make a wide appeal, but if this kind of thing has to be done, and I submit it should be, for the sake of posterity, only the finest artists should be chosen to do it. This is fortunately the case with Mme. Suggia's record. Bach, as it were, draws with a moving finger, and we follow as best we can the intricacies of his patterning; feeling, when he has made an end, "wonder for the genius who dare write (fugues) for a single instrument of four strings, and build upon the same unpromising site so marvellous an architectural and poetical achievement as the *Violin Chaconne*" (Boughton).

Madame dal Monte performs wonders of vocal agility with Benedict's showpiece, which is about as exhilarating as wax fruit under glass! Her records seem to have a slight tendency to blast on high notes.

Entirely delightful is Thibaud's playing of a nice open-air piece of music, a sonata by Veracini. "His compositions were considered too wild and flighty for England," says Burney the historian in 1714, when Veracini was regarded as the greatest violinist in Europe and when he was leader of the Italian Opera Band. A very successful recording.

Pinza sings one of the Arch Druid's arias from *Norma* in impressive style; it has one of those mandoline-like accompaniments which aroused Wagner's scorn, but there is a kind of beautiful sincerity, a charming simplicity about the music that is very attractive. This fine bass is unusually modest; he never seems to want the stage all to himself, but shares it with a chorus or another singer, as in these two excerpts. Signor L'Alessio is a bit of a bleater, and Donizetti's music is notably inferior to that of Bellini, being nothing more than a good fake; but the record is worth having for the previous aria.

The two songs by Rachmaninoff chosen by John McCormack are usually sung by a high soprano and a mezzo-soprano respectively, but the tenor renders them in his own personal way with charming effect. *How fair this spot* contains one of those passages where an inessential word, in this case "and," is thrown into high relief with complete justification from the musical, if not the verbal, point of view. The singer pitches with beautiful ease right into the middle of the high note referred to. *To the children*, a poignant little song of quite different character, has one of Kreisler's inimitable obbligatos which alone makes it worth possessing, apart from its intrinsic merits.

(June Issues.)

- D.B.831 (12in., 8s. 6d.).—**Toti dal Monte** (soprano) with orchestral accompaniment: **Selva Opaca** from *Act 2, Guglielmo Tell* (Rossini) and **Deh! vieni, non tardar** from *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Mozart).
- D.A.565 (10in., 6s.).—**Maria Jeritza** (soprano) with orchestral accompaniment: **Vissi d'arte, vissi d'amore** from *La Tosca* (Puccini) and **Voi lo sapete, O mamma** from *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Mascagni).



- D.B.109 (12in., 8s. 6d.).—**Beniamino Gigli** (tenor) with orchestral accompaniment: *O Paradiso dall'onde uscito* from *L'Africana* (Meyerbeer) and *M'appari tutt'amor* from *Marta* (Flotow).
- D.B.835 (12in., 8s. 6d.).—**Apollo Granforte** (baritone) with orchestral accompaniment: *Credo in un Dio Crudel* from *Otello* (Verdi) and *O monumento! Regia e Bolgia Dogale* from *La Gioconda* (Ponchielli).
- D.996 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—**Royal Albert Hall Orchestra**, conducted by Sir Landon Ronald: *Dance of the Hours, Parts 1 and 2* from *La Gioconda* (Ponchielli).
- D.995 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—**Wilhelm Backhaus** (pianoforte): *Caprice Espagnol, Op. 37* (Moszkowski) and *Bohemian Dance* (Smetana).
- E.383 (10in., 4s. 6d.).—**Cedric Sharpe** ('cello) with pianoforte acc. by Cecil Dixon: *Believe me, if all those endearing young charms* (arr. C. Sharpe) and *Rosemary, that's for remembrance* (Edward Elgar).
- E.384 (10in., 4s. 6d.).—**Harry Dearth** (bass) with pianoforte accompaniment: *Maggie's Wedding* (W. Sanderson) and *The Skipper of the Mary Jane*.
- E.385 (10in., 4s. 6d.).—**Derek Oldham** (tenor) with pianoforte accompaniment: *O Mistress Mine* (Roger Quilter) and *Fair House of Joy* (Roger Quilter).
- E.386 (10in., 4s. 6d.).—**Eric Marshall** (baritone) with pianoforte accompaniment: *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt* (None but the weary heart) (Tchaikovsky) and *Dreams* (Wagner).
- E.387 (10in., 4s. 6d.).—**Phyllis Lett** (contralto) with pianoforte accompaniment: *A Prayer to Our Lady* (Donald Ford) and *The Coming of a Dream* (R. Knight).
- E.382 (10in., 4s. 6d.).—**Gresham Singers** (Male Quartet) unaccompanied: *What Ho! What Ho!* (W. Beale) and *O Peaceful Night* (Edward German).
- C.1199 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Band of H.M. Coldstream Guards**: *Lustspiel Overture, Op. 73* (Keler Bela) and *La voix des Cloches* (Luigini).
- B.1998 (10in., 3s.).—**De Groot and the Piccadilly Orchestra**: *Madrigale* (Simonetti) and *An Autumn Serenade* (G. Becce).
- C.1196 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra**: *A Suite of Serenades*:—No. 1, *Spanish*; No. 2, *Chinese*; No. 3, *Cuban*; No. 4, *Oriental* (Victor Herbert).
- B.2021 (10in., 3s.).—**Frank Crumit** (humorous) with ukelele and pianoforte accompaniment: *Insufficient Sweetie* (Wells and Jones) and *Get yourself a broom and sweep your troubles away* (Rose Brockman and Von Tilzer).
- B.2000 (10in., 3s.).—**Cyril Newton** (baritone): *Do you remember the Love Nest* (R. Vincent Herbert) and *Back in Hackensack, New Jersey* (Beiner and Riffe).
- C.1200 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Una Bourne** (pianoforte): *Lyrische Stückchen, Op. 12*; No. 2, *Walzer*; No. 6, *Norwegisch*; No. 5, *Volkswiese*; No. 4, *Elfentanz* (Grieg) and *Wedding Day* (Grieg).

No doubt I shall, like "J.," stand accused of being a worshipper of music if I declare that Toti dal Monte takes unwarrantable liberties with Susanna's lovely aria from the *Marriage of Figaro*, *Deh! vieni, non tardar*. It is generally agreed that Mozart's power of characterisation has never been equalled, so that for Madame dal Monte to pull the rhythm about here and there for a special vocal effect, to transpose a passage an octave higher because, presumably, the notes written are not in her voice, to prolong a note to display her breath control, is hardly impersonating Mozart's Susanna. It is, indeed, misrepresentation! Perhaps, though, she regards the aria merely as a vehicle for display. Many readers are Mozart lovers; what have they to say about it? The singer is far better suited in the Rossini aria, which, by the way, is not at all negligible as music, but in neither case does her voice, as a voice, afford me much pleasure. It will be most interesting to hear Madame dal Monte at Covent Garden this season. Astounding technique she certainly has, but what is there besides? Another artist we shall hear at the opera is Madame Jeritza, about

whom the press are inventing, already, wonderful stories; one in particular, relating to an "escape" from a convent, puts Maria Monk quite in the shade!

Jeritza has a noble voice, but she does not yet record very well, and my copy of *Vissi d'arte* had a nasty "blast" on the high B flat. No record of this aria so far issued can touch Destinn's version. There is far too little light and shade in this one. The aria from *Cavalleria* is very successful and beautifully sung. Without effacing memories of Caruso, Gigli is undoubtedly a fine artist though he is rather inclined to overdo the tenorial dumps, if I may coin the phrase.

The following naïve passage is quoted from "Opera at Home," in reference to *M'appari tutt'amor*. "... the voice of the tenor ... is only sustained by a very light *viola* accompaniment. That is why all great tenors prefer this romance, for thus they can show their artistry in *canto legato* and in *sfumature*, there being no orchestral instruments to drown the voice" (italics mine). What a pity that noisy fellow Wagner had not taken a lesson or two from the gifted composer of *Marta*! It sounds as if a wind accompaniment were being used for many of the above arias although the labels announce "orchestral accompaniment." In this year of grace with gramophone recording at its present high pitch, surely what the composer has written, and that only, should be recorded.

Apollo Granforte—can this *really* be his name?—has made a splendid record of two very dramatic arias. He excels in declamation, of which the arias are composed, and his voice records exceptionally well. The Ballet Music from *Gioconda* is well known as a light concert piece. It comes from Act 3 of the opera, where it is introduced not only for the entertainment of the operatic guests, but to form a contrast to the dramatic events which follow. Somewhat long in getting under way, the music, well recorded, provides a pleasant diversion from more serious things.

Smetana's *Bohemian Dance* is a particularly charming piece of music played with clear tone and clean technique by Backhaus. It has a true national flavour, like all its composer's works, a quality lacking in Moszkowski's *Spanish Caprice*, which, however, is quite enjoyable played in such a masterly way. The piano-tone is good. The two pieces Cedric Sharpe has chosen make restful hearing for the poor reviewer. The fragrant charm of the first, the sweetness of Elgar's bon-bon form a delightful record for those who are fond of the 'cello. The recording is excellent. Harry Dearth always makes his songs interesting and his diction is invariably first-rate; so one can sit back without any misgivings to listen to the pathetic story of *Maggie's Wedding* and the humours of the hired-out "Mary Jane's" skipper. A good holiday record. Derek Oldham also scores full marks for diction allied to a voice of delightful quality. The fresh enthusiasm of his singing in two well-known Quilter songs is very welcome.

It is a small point, but why does Eric Marshall sing Tchaikovsky in German and Wagner in English? "Visions" is a poor substitute for "Träume." More serious is the truncation of Wagner's lovely accompaniment to this study for *Tristan and Isolde*, the substitution of the piano for the pulsating tone of strings and the languorous sighing of the horns. Mr. Marshall is evidently feeling the music sincerely, but the result is not an unqualified success. Perhaps Kirkby Lunn is the only English singer who can get this song "over." Gerhardt even finds it none too easy. Mr. Marshall is excellent in the Tchaikovsky song. A touchingly beautiful lyric, *A Prayer to Our Lady*, well set by Donald Ford, is Phyllis Lett's chief contribution, for the reverse is a hymn tune ballad supported by a rather thin violin obbligato. Miss Lett never uses more tone than is actually necessary, the result being artistic singing of a high order. *O si sic omnes!*

Admirers of the Gresham Singers will not be disappointed with their new recording of a well-constructed part song of Beale's and a pleasant effort of German's.

It is wonderful how de Groot manages to discover something new and attractive for our delectation every month. Simonetti's *Madrigale* is, of course, a well-known violin piece often recorded, but I don't remember to have heard Becce's *Autumn Serenade* before. He writes good light music untainted by sentimentality. Two songs in the American language make vivacious hearing; the second, after an alarming start, is especially amusing. At the end of this long list comes Una Bourne; last but not least! Her playing of well-known Grieg music—how many school pianos resound yearly with it—is thoroughly sound and musicianly. The recording is good.

N. P.



## CORRESPONDENCE

*De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum.*

[All letters and manuscripts should be written on one side only of the paper and should be addressed to the Editor, The Gramophone, 58, Frith Street, London, W.1. The writer's full name and address must be given. A stamped envelope must be enclosed if an answer or the return of the manuscript is desired. The Editor wishes to emphasise the obvious fact that the publication of letters does not imply his agreement with the views expressed by correspondents.]

## WHERE ARE THE LADIES?

*(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)*

DEAR SIR,—I am seriously perturbed, having been looking through the back numbers of our paper, to find an almost complete absence of the fair sex. The "Words Wanted" section is about the only place in which they appear (what a painful thought it is, a member of the charming sex being "short of words!!"). Surely we have some fair readers in the fraternity, but if so, where are they? Have they no interest in the great affairs of state such as needle-track alignment, sound-boxes, gaskets, etc., etc.? Surely they are not *all* like my wife—I should say, Mrs. Afflatus, of "Sound Wave." True, we got one article by Fay Compton, but I suppose we shouldn't have got *that*, only she is the Editor's sister. I did think there was some hope, when the Editor sent his H.M.V. pleated diaphragm to his wife, but alas, either it is nothing to write home about, or the lady's views on the subject are quite unprintable. But how much brighter our pages would be if they contained some charming prattle from the fair sex. And I regret to say, sir, that you have done nothing to encourage them. Are you a woman-hater, or did you merely never think about them at all? Why not a competition, labelled like the railway compartments, "Ladies Only," say, for the best essay on "What Music is *Not*." (Rule 1: No definitions to be used which have been previously used, by your critic "J," Mr. Sorabji, or in any other cross-word puzzle!)

However, that is "en passant": the main point, from which I refuse to be side-tracked is, "Where are the ladies?" Are we a bachelor affair entirely, or are the sweet little things too shy, or what? Will some of them please tell us? I hope my wife won't reply, for she frequently tells me at great length what she thinks about: (a) The gramophone (instrument); (b) THE GRAMOPHONE (paper); (c) the Editor of (b); (d) the London Editor of (b); (e) myself; (f) all other matters arising out of (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e), and connected therewith, and as I don't want her to know I've written this, if she re-opens the subject, I must sign myself

St. Helens.

Yours perturbedly,

SCRUTATOR.

## AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS.

*(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)*

DEAR SIR,—In thanking Mr. Porte for his most interesting article in the current issue of THE GRAMOPHONE, I should like to draw attention to the fact that the Coates records of the Beethoven *Seventh Symphony* are not black label records, but blue label, corresponding with the H.M.V. black. The Victor black label corresponds with the English plum and all Victor Celebrity records are, I believe, red. . . . In addition to those records noticed by Mr. Porte, I should like to mention a few recent numbers. Stokowski's interpretation of Stravinsky's *Fire Bird* is excellent, the recording being of the best, and the clarity of the individual instruments exceptional (red 6492-3).

By far the best rendering I have yet heard, either recorded or in the concert hall, of the *Afternoon of a Faun* (you will notice how plebian the Americans are!) is given by Stokowski on record 6481. The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra under Rudolph Ganz gives an excellent record of Weber's *Euryanthe Overture* (55229 blue label), far superior to anything on English records. The Victor Symphony Orchestra's performance of *Orpheus in Hades Overture* is excellent from every point of view, the volume and detail of tone being superlative. This combination is, I believe, conducted by Rosario Bourdon.

Southampton.

Yours, etc.

BERT C. BEVIS.

## PIANO RECORDS.

*(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)*

DEAR SIR,—I hope it may be possible for you to find room for a letter in support of Mr. Leslie Hill's plea for further recordings of the larger piano works. Well recorded by such players as Moiseiwitch, or Backhaus, whose touch seems so well suited to the gramophone, I am sure such items would secure the support of a large public. In addition to the Chopin pieces mentioned by Mr. Hill, surely it is time that we had the preludes complete and at least one set of the studies—the Schumann *Sonata in G minor*—the great Schubert *Fantasia in C (The Wanderer)* which Backhaus seems to have made peculiarly his own—the *Sonata in D minor* by B. Dale, so seldom heard because there are so few who can do justice to it, and which is probably the finest work of its kind since the Schumann mentioned above.

I wonder if Mr. Hambourg, who seems the most enterprising of all recording pianists, could be persuaded to give us one of the sets from *Iberia* by Albéniz? They all (there are four) contain much wonderful music, but they should be done without cuts. Last, and by no means least, is it too much to hope in these enlightened days that some time in the near future we shall open the H.M.V. monthly supplement to find that Mr. Harold Samuel has recorded the first (say) book of the "48" complete?

May I point out a slight mistake which occurs in your article on page 407 of the April number. The Vocalion records of the Beethoven *String Quartet in C sharp minor* are unfortunately far from complete. Half the first movement is missing and several other smaller cuts are made. The word complete should apply to the Columbia issue only.

Rossall.

Yours faithfully,  
(Rev'd.) D. CAMPBELL MILLER.

## RECORDS IN HOT CLIMATES.

*(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)*

SIR,—I should like to see a discussion in your paper of a very important question—namely, the care of records in a hot climate.

I recently returned from a stay in England and found all my beautiful records warped. They were warped to such a degree as to affect the pitch of the music. I had left them in H.M.V. albums and laid the albums flat on a table one on top of the other—head to tail, so to speak—that is, an album with the back on one side would have one on top of it with the front towards that side. They were left like this for about seven months.

They all appeared to be warped in the same direction, due, I think, to the compression at the front end of the album and the separation at the back. I began to make enquiries and found that other people had had experience of warped records. The general idea of a cure seemed to be to replace them in their covers, put them in a pile in a warm atmosphere and place a weight on top of them. The Gramophone Co. confirm this and recommend that in a warm climate records be kept flat in their covers and protected from heat, and in no case left in a vertical position. The question arises, what is the best method of protecting them from heat? I suggested to someone an airtight cupboard; the records to be placed on shelves in piles of from 20 to 50, or in cardboard boxes, with weights on top of them. My friend objected to the exclusion of air, affirming that this would make heat. In the course of my enquiries I visited the H.M.V. agent here, who has a large stock of records. I found his records all in perfect condition. They were in piles of from 50 to 100 on tables in a fairly cool building and had been turned over about once a month all through the summer.

Another interesting question is, are the needle grooves affected by heat apart from the warping? It seemed to me that the volume of the music was diminished. Details in orchestral records were eliminated. The piano records were the worst, the notes having a horrid cracked and out-of-tune sound.

Perhaps some of your readers may have some useful suggestions to make.

Haifa, Palestine.

Yours faithfully,

W. F. S.

## MOZART OPERAS.

*(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)*

DEAR SIR,—Referring to the correspondence regarding the recording of a complete Mozart opera, if I might make a suggestion I would strongly recommend that as a beginning the choice should be *Il Seraglio*. Should this be successful, then *Figaro* or one of the others might be attempted. There are various points which, in



my opinion, favour *Il Seraglio*. This opera being shorter than *Figaro*, *Don Juan*, and *Magic Flute*, would require less records, which means less expense for buyers and very likely a larger sale. Also, although a comparatively short opera, *Il Seraglio* contains a good number of beautiful arias, some of which I enumerated in my previous letter of last September, as well as the charming overture. A lover of Mozart, who is not acquainted with this opera, will be astonished at its beauty. There are only six in the cast (one of them, Selim, is a speaking part) and this will make the opera easy to follow. The story also is simple. Further, there is very little chorus and this should be an advantage, as it appears to me that chorus and orchestra combined always seem rather difficult to record satisfactorily. During the first appearance of the chorus, a Turkish dance is generally introduced, although it is not given in my score. As, however, it is taken from one of Mozart's own piano sonatas, *Alla Turca*, and lends itself so well, I don't think anyone will object to this importation. Finally, only a small orchestra is necessary—delicacy being the principal feature of this opera. Robert Radford cannot be improved upon for the part of Osmin, and he has already recorded two of the bass solos, *When a maiden takes your fancy* and *Ah! my pretty brace of fellows*. Also Browning Mummery as Belmont. Both have already played these parts in B.N.O.C.

If one of the companies decide to record this opera or any other Mozart opera, I appeal to them to let us have it *complete*. The soprano parts include some high and difficult singing, but this is easily managed by Miss Miriam Licette.

Liverpool.

Yours truly,  
E. L. G.

#### THE HIGH PRICE OF RECORDS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—No letter in THE GRAMOPHONE, not even the one which dealt with the exorbitant price of THE GRAMOPHONE, has pleased me so much as Mr. H. H. Sanford's in the April issue. His remarks are admirable in their pungency and common sense. Personally I think it is high time that the gramophone mandarins in Oxford Street and Clerkenwell Road particularly, realised that not all the music-lovers in the poorer classes are satisfied with the tripe which is consistently served up at the only price they can afford. Strange as it may seem to these companies' pundits, there are a few people (and I am one of them) who simply can not purchase 34s. sonatas and 26s. quartets with the same freedom as twenty gaspers.

If THE GRAMOPHONE would annihilate the 8s. 6d. record and the 7s. 6d. record and the 6s. 6d. and the 5s. record, or failing this do something to justify its existence by raising a most unholly smoke it would be doing a service, I imagine, to more of its readers than it thinks, who must read the reviews of these expensive productions with a grim smile and content themselves with the much-belaboured "snippets."

Kendal.

Yours faithfully,

NORMAN D. SNAITH.

#### POLYDOR RECORDS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—You ask for a report on these German discs, so I give you my unbiased verdict on the following items:—

*Brahms' First Symphony*.—Compared with the fine album issued by our English Columbia Co., the only thing in favour is the price. The score reveals many sins of omission and commission, and the playing is rough and jerky; violins, wood-wind, and percussion weak; smudgy ensemble; poor surfaces, lacking shellac.

*Beethoven's Sixth Symphony (Pastorale)*.—The small orchestra and scanty violins are good for the first two movements, but are not sufficiently augmented for the famous "Merry-making" and "Storm" scenes, though the finale is excellent; surfaces good enough for 4s. 6d., at which price I was supplied by our local dealer (T. W. Brown, Lower Arcade, Bristol).

*Beethoven's Fourth Symphony (Love)*.—This is a good investment. Smooth surfaces, artistic rendering, clear and clean recording.

*Kikimora (Liadov)*.—A very excellent rendering by a Russian conductor, but the tone is weak and thin, especially on Part 1; it is, however, improving by careful "fibre" polishing. Scratchy surface.

*Carnival Romain (Berlioz)*.—I prefer the rendering by Nikisch. Although an older record it is a large orchestra, magnificently welded together, and the full tone overcomes the sandy surface noise.

*Wagner Excerpts*.—Sigrid Onegin and all the men are splendid; I think the Germans succeed well with the human voice, but the orchestra invariably has to take second place. All items not included in the English H.M.V. catalogue are well worth acquiring, though I have to pay 5s. 6d. for the celebrities. Most of the women get flat, especially Helene Wildbrunn.

Everyone should get No. 72934, *Valkyrie* (F. Leider and L. Melchoir), which completes a gap in our splendid H.M.V. set! The *Tristan Prelude* is cut at end and a bit of the finale tacked on. *Rienzi* and *Tannhäuser*: The first is good and complete; the second cut.

Bris'ol.

Yours truly,

E. S. GUNTON.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—In the March number of the gramophone you ask for comment from those who have heard the larger orchestral pieces from the Polydor catalogue. Voilà! I have the good fortune to have the majority of those that I am pleased to consider interesting: the Mahler, the various Beethoven, the Anton Bruckner, and all the Strauss. For us in America it is a grand catalogue, and I was very lucky, I feel, in getting them in. We do not have the same outlay here that you do in England, nor the same chance to buy good music.

For the most part I feel that the records are good. I am not as yet as interested in nor do I know much about the mechanics. My comments will be from the standpoint of the music itself and the interpretation. I am most pleased, I think, with the Strauss. And of all that, including as it does four poems and six faces from *Der Burgher* and *Ariadne*, the Strauss conducted is by far the most successful. I have had for some time *Don Juan*, made by Albert Coates, but I am afraid that it is now permanently cast aside (I have never had the pleasure of hearing the other English recordings of the poems, I imagine they think that they would be a bit over our heads here; poor Victor). *Till* is beautifully made, but in both *Death and Transfiguration* and *Zarathustra* I was somewhat disappointed, much more so in the former than in the latter. At the same time I am more than glad to get them and will put them in a very prominent place on my shelves. The stuff from *Burger als Edelman* is delightful all the way through and at the same time very well made.

The Gustav Mahler is—what? It is a stupendous thing and it took great courage to make it, but after all was it worth making? That is, I'm afraid, not the question for these pages. It is well made, there can be no denying that. From all standpoints a fine set of records. Oskar Fried is a mighty conductor and he has done wonders with the records. The chorus and solos are exceptionally good, a thing rather rare in records. A thing which we can hardly say for the Beethoven *Ninth*. I have not heard either the H.M.V. nor the Parlophone versions, and so naturally can make no comparisons. The Beethoven No. 4 and 3 are well made and make a very valuable addition to any collection. The third because it is the only complete version I have ever heard, and the fourth because it is the only one that I have ever heard.

I anxiously am awaiting their supplements.

Yours very truly,

Chicago, Ill.

VORIES FISHER.

[Our reviewer, "N. P.," writes: "Mr. Gunton, whose remarks in the main I agree with, does less than justice to the women singers in the Polydor list, while Sigrid Onegin's records of Brahms' *Ernte Gesänge*—the last music he ever wrote—are the most moving I have ever heard. A high tribute of praise must go to many of the recordings of Claire Dux, Lotte Lehmann, Frida Leider, Maria Olszewska, and especially Elizabeth Schumann, whose record of Pamina's aria from the *Magic Flute* is absolutely perfect singing. Generally speaking, the piano accompaniments are beautifully balanced with the voice, but the orchestral ones are not prominent enough: that to the excellent record of the Marchallin's Monologue from the *Rose Cavalier* by Else Gentner-Fischer is a shining exception. Anyone who cares for fine lieder-singing cannot do less than purchase all Schumann recordings of Strauss and Wolf. The latter's *Verschwiegene Liebe* is ravishingly done. Personally I thought *Zarathustra* good, but the orchestral recordings are rarely of such a high standard as those of the English companies. Indeed, the whole root of the matter seems to me that the recording is no better than ours (often not so good), but the artists get over a real performance instead of, what one so often feels on English records, merely playing or singing into the recording apparatus. That blessed word temperament comes out on the record so that,



even when a singer does go flat we can more easily forgive the lapse because a fine interpretation conceived as a whole has been put before us."]

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

SIR,—I must protest against the paragraph on page 475 of this month's GRAMOPHONE, as it leaves a very unpleasant impression. This is the situation as it appears to a purchaser of records. On page 373 of the March issue of THE GRAMOPHONE appears a price-list of Polydor records which agrees with a price-list obtained from the "remarkably enterprising as well as efficient neighbour" of yours.

Let E equal the R.E. and E. neighbour and F the fly that sat on the chariot wheel.

Class.	E's prices.		F's prices.		Difference.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
2 ..	3	6	3	0	0	6
2 M ..	5	0	4	0	1	0
4 ..	4	6	3	6	1	0
4 M ..	5	9	4	9	1	0
6 ..	4	6	3	6	1	0
6 M ..	5	9	4	9	1	0
7 ..	5	0	4	0	1	0
7 M* ..	7	6	5	9	1	9
20 ..	5	0	4	0	1	0
20 M* ..	7	6	5	9	1	9
11 M* ..	8	0	5	9	2	3

In the case of the starred items it is clearly evident that "enterprising" is not the word to use—from the purchaser's point of view. However, "E's" prices are now down to "F's" a fact which speaks for itself, and we purchasers are truly thankful. This advantage to we purchasers having been obtained, it would have sufficed for you to have merely drawn attention to the reduction in prices and not launched out in an effort to become censoriously epithetical and funny. The quotation from *Æsop* is not at all apposite and the blather about "injudicious leaflets circulated—behind our backs, so to speak," is, in my opinion, quite discreditable. Because you know well enough that you would not have published "F's" protest against what he considered to be neglect and partisanship—any more than you will dare to publish this letter.

I and several more of your readers amongst my friends have watched with interest this apparent display of partisanship, and therefore were not at all surprised to receive copies of the leaflets in question. The "injudiciousness" lies in the action which called them forth. A further injudiciousness is indicated in advising your readers that a particular retailer's stock (for so I read it) is to be subjected to a reviewing—which I presume means playing the records, in view of the fact that such a process (judging from many of your articles) appears to consist of playing them on "umpteenth" different instruments before deciding whether or not they are any good. I, for one, always order my records and call for them promptly so as to ensure getting unplayed discs. Dealers' stocks I leave to the casual purchaser.

You have clearly fired your guns in the wrong direction. I shall await your reply with interest. I am, yours sincerely,

Old Charlton, S.E. 7.

CHAS. F. BENNETT.

[We print this letter because we have no desire whatever to shirk the issue, and the only reason why mention of the matter was confined to a short paragraph in the May number was a reason of space. It is, after all, a very small matter. Boiled down from a quantity of verbiage it amounts to this:—We told our readers in November (page 209) that "F" (Mr. W. E. Barnett) sold Musica records; in January (page 311), misled by the fact that "F" was advertising "Continental" instead of "Musica" records, we corrected the statement and added that "Musica" records under the name of "Polydore" were obtainable from "E" (Messrs. Alfred Imhof), who had sent us a catalogue of them. In March we printed notes from correspondents on Polydor records (pages 373-4), without mentioning either "E" or "F," but quoting "current English prices" from "E's" catalogue. These were hardly correct as the above letter shows. However, we had no protest from "F," or, of course, we should have explained how the error arose. Instead, "F" circularised his customers with leaflets for which "injudicious" is a mild epithet.

Prices, of course, are likely to be somewhat arbitrary when a foreign exchange is concerned. Messrs. Imhof reduced all their prices last month to the same rates as Mr. Barnett, and now Mr.

Barnett has cut them by another 6d. all round! The public scores. For all that we know, other firms may be selling Polydor even more cheaply. But the purchaser wants to be sure that he will get the records which he orders as soon as possible, and as we have not had a single complaint of the treatment shown to readers by Messrs. Imhof, is there any reason why we should not recommend our "remarkably enterprising as well as efficient neighbour"?

The last part of our correspondent's letter needs no reply. Does he really suppose that records sent for review are returned to stock for sale to people less wary than himself?—Ed.]

## THE PLEATED DIAPHRAGM.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Mr. Balmain prophesied recently in these pages that the pleated diaphragm would die a natural death due to its excessive inertia. Inertia, were it present in a sound-box would cause the mechanism to be insufficiently resilient (lacking in elasticity). The impulse from the groove would be transferred to the needle, but the force required to overcome the inertia of the transitory mechanism of pivots and bars would be so greatly in excess of the impulse force supplied that the needle would remain rigid. This would cause considerable wear on the record. If the inertia were present in slightly less degree than I have supposed there would be an appreciable time before the diaphragm responded to the movements of the needle; the result would be a muzzy tone and confused reproduction; the notes would reproduce in an intensity directly proportional to their relative pitch. The technique of recording would therefore have to be altered entirely to accommodate the new relative values. Actually the diaphragm shows no such need. The inertia of a sound-box or large diaphragm depends upon the comparative elasticity of its components, chief of which is the diaphragm itself. (The remaining portions of the mechanism afford so little opportunity for the production of inertia of appreciable value that they may be ignored.) There are two types of reproducing unit: the "high tension" and the "low tension," and it is to the latter that Monsieur Louis Lumière's invention belongs. The diaphragm, whichever system it belongs to, must have certain properties; elasticity and flexibility in one direction only. If elasticity were the only requirement, glass would be the ideal medium, but it has not the additional property of flexibility in one plane only. Composition diaphragms have little or no true elasticity and, with the exception of the built-up silk diaphragms, there is not a single practical substitute for mica. Owing to its peculiar structure mica is the ideal medium of sound-box diaphragms. Indeed, if it were not would not the big companies cease manufacturing mica soundboxes? The Gramophone Company tells me that it can use only about 10 per cent. of the mica bought to ensure that it only uses pieces entirely free from flaws. But ideal though the mica diaphragm be for the small sound-box, it is not suitable for the construction of large diaphragms. There are several reasons for its unsuitability, one being, of course, the fact that sheets of flawless mica this size would be very expensive and would render the regular production of such diaphragms impossible. Secondary strains would also be set up and the whole affair would be as fickle and as wayward as it is possible to imagine. The pleated diaphragm has overcome every defect which might be imagined of it.

I have said that there is no satisfactory substitute for mica owing to its unique structure, but the pleats of the diaphragm are an artificial method of producing the same properties: elasticity and flexibility in one plane only. Where the diaphragm has to be stiffest and most elastic (the centre) the pleats are deepest, they also give the parchment the necessary rigidity. All in all, the pleated diaphragm is less given to effects of inertia than a good many of the "large" sound-boxes, and since the whole system is on the comparatively "loose" principles of the "low tension" school, a purer and more natural tone is obtained than from any high tension sound-box, quite apart from the fact that no amplifying horn or other device is required.

I know very little of the effects of climatic conditions on the pleated diaphragms beyond these effects due to the delightful uncertainties of our own climate. Of these my diaphragm has had its full share. I have had my diaphragm since just before the middle of October, 1924, and since that time it has been in an empty room entirely unwarmed. The windows have been open all the time, frost, rain, snow, or wind, and I have experienced no ill-effects upon the reproduction of the pleated diaphragm. I have had trouble in one direction, however; the instrument shows up



every little carelessness in the recording in the most lamentable manner.

Yours faithfully,

Wealdstone.

B. D. WRATTEN.

### OPERA.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Opera in England, with very few exceptions, seemed to be getting into a groove when only certain operas are performed, and others which seem really worthy of performance are hardly ever produced. The "Old Vic." is perhaps one of the few exceptions. It was a great pleasure to hear Mozart's *Don Giovanni* performed by their excellent company; Arnold Beauvais, who has quite a good voice, and aided by his powers of acting, made a fine Leporello. Sumner Austin also made a very good Don. The rôle of Donna Anna was ably taken by Gladys van der Beech, although this exacting part showed that her voice was not quite equal to the strain. Why is it that there is such a great deal of repetition in the programme at Covent Garden? Why do not the B.N.O.C. or the Carl Rosa revive some of these operas, which have long been forgotten? Some say that it is because of lack of funds, but surely this is not the case at Covent Garden. It is a great pity that one never gets a chance of hearing such brilliant operas such as *Sadko* (Rimsky-Korsakoff) and *I Lombardi* (Verdi). From these two operas the gramophone companies do not seem to have found anything worth recording. Why is this? *King Arthur* (Purcell), although not fulfilling the idea of modern opera, contains many fine songs and choruses, and is certainly worthy of a performance every few years. But no, we have practically the same set of operas year after year.

Perhaps when the Imperial Opera House scheme is realised we may hear some of these operas, but in the meantime let us hope that at any rate the gramophone companies will lead the way. I am sure that the many readers of THE GRAMOPHONE will agree that the recording companies should be approached on the subject.

Yours sincerely,

"OPERATIC."

Bristol.

### FROM FAR AWAY.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—The Piano-Player Supplement is read with as much interest as your delightful causerie THE GRAMOPHONE. Both my husband and myself would be sorry to miss it. The articles by Mr. Sidney Grew on Spanish Music have been thoroughly enjoyed by us both. Having been marooned in Portuguese East Africa for the last twelve years, these publications mean a great deal to us. Were it not for this impossible climate, a damp heat which reduces the salt to brine in the salt cellars and the sugar to syrup in the sugar-bowl, the total absence of expert assistance, to say nothing of the premium placed upon civilisation by Portuguese duties, we should certainly get a piano and player, with this excellent brochure as counsellor and guide. Our gramophonage is too much in its infancy for us to state any decided preferences, but both being keen on chamber music, the Mozart and Haydn quartets have given great delight. A Spanish Bolero (Fernandez Arbos) comes out very well in lighter music; Battisinni and Galli-Curci are favourite opera singers, Kirkby Lunn our only contralto, and I should like more of Claire Dux. Those *lieder* appeal to me as much or more than the vocal gymnastics of opera.

May I dare to say that the variety of opinion expressed in THE GRAMOPHONE anent records, machines, and gadgets, is extremely helpful if also equally diverting. I am, yours truly,

Portuguese East Africa, Quelimane.

C. M. KLINDWORTH.

### SOUND-BOX MATTERS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—May I say a few words in reply to Mr. G. L. Johnstone (Vol. 2, page 500). I am quite aware that high-priced sound-boxes exist fitted with aluminium diaphragms and that sound-boxes can be and are made without tension springs; but what bearing have these facts on my inference that if a box has tension springs, which can be adjusted over a fairly wide range without perceptibly influencing the tone, then the box is not likely to be very sensitive? I did not say that aluminium was inferior to or less sensitive than mica and my accusation that aluminium can lie was carefully qualified. Mr. Johnstone now tells us twice that his sound-box is not as sensitive as it might be,

first when he informs us of the most sensitive aluminium diaphragm, immediately adding that he uses something else, and secondly when he states that in making his adjustment he effects a compromise between tonal quality and surface noise.

I never said that the results Mr. Johnstone claims to obtain are impossible, for his alignment, concerning which he says nothing, may be very good; I only gave reasons for believing that his evidence is not conclusive and that he may be deceiving himself. Lastly, I would add that whatever may be the results obtained on his own particular machine, they do not alter the fact that the average commercial machine with a short tone-arm and bad alignment is a record destroyer.

Ilford.

Yours truly,

H. F. V. LITTLE.

### PIANOFORTE RECORDING.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

SIR,—How critics differ! Especially when dealing with records! You, Sir, in your "Review of the First Quarter of 1925," in describing the Bach *Pianoforte Concerto in D minor*, say: "The piano tone is brittle and the strings lack virility," whereas a contemporary reviewing the same work finds that "The piano tone is good, and the whole performance crisp and rhythmical." In an arena so prepared, angels should, properly, fear to tread, but one at least dares to do so, trusting that he will be allowed to escape wing-whole.

Many have doubtless wondered what the standard aimed at in recording the piano should be, as well as what it is. Should the desired effect be that of the instrument in the room; or the atmosphere of the concert room (as near as need be); or should a middle course be sought after? In reviewing in our minds the existing pianoforte concertos in particular, we must be struck by the—in most instances—lack of balance between the solo instrument and the accompanying orchestra. In my opinion, this was never so apparent as in the rendering of Schumann's *Concerto* by Cortot; against which we have a more recent issue of Mendelssohn's *Concerto* as rendered by Moiseivitch, where the balance is practically restored.

Here we possibly see the performer as the culprit in one instance; but surely this is not right?

Now let us return to the Bach *Concerto* already mentioned: what do we find? The concert-room atmosphere, plus personality. The whole keyboard receiving equal value.

It is perhaps a large question, this of standard, as the average person is always catered for, and in this case, no doubt, is not always a thinker. It may not be possible for any of the recording companies to discuss the matter in point, but I feel sure that it has not yet received due consideration as a debatable topic, as it possesses numerous possibilities.

Brixton.

Yours faithfully,

S. F. D. HOWARTH.

[The real difficulty about giving a just criticism of records is not the difference of opinion among critics, but the fact that every critic is using a different machine, and that most of them are only using one machine. I try out every record of importance on four gramophones. During the last two months I have been able on one of my gramophones to give records a far more searching test than they have ever had before. Naturally, in writing my criticism of the Bach *Concerto* I judged it as I should judge a concert-room performance. If the piano tone were compared with the piano tone in any of the H.M.V. or Vocalion records I should imagine that nine critics out of ten would find it relatively brittle. In the past I have been tempted to put forward a final opinion that the Columbia strings are too fluty. With my present combination I can acquit them of this vice, and in criticising the strings in the Bach piano *Concerto* I was judging them in comparison with Columbia strings on other records. By that standard they lack virility. They have no "catguts." The Columbia strings in the Bach *Concerto* for two violins are virile enough.

I agree with our correspondent about the hopeless lack of balance between the piano and the orchestra in the Schumann *Concerto*; but I cannot agree with him that the balance has been restored in the Mendelssohn *Concerto*. This is not so good as the Liszt *Concerto in E*, and nothing like so good as the Hungarian *Fantasia*. The last is, in my opinion, with Beethoven's *Emperor* second, the most successful pianoforte concerto up to date. After them I should put the Franck *Variations*, then the Grieg, then the Liszt, then the Saint-Saens and the Mendelssohn, then the Bach, and at the end of a long tail the Schumann. But it is depressing that what we must presume to be the latest records are the worst.—C. M.]



# Gramophone Societies' Reports

[Reports must reach the London Office before the fifteenth day of the month for inclusion in the next number. No report should exceed 350 words, unless for some special reason more space is urgently required. Items from programmes must be incorporated in the report; programmes separately attached cannot be printed.]

**LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.**—The Committee of the Liverpool Society—without any very conscious effort maybe—have succeeded in establishing the custom of staging, once every session, a meeting of exceptional interest and importance. These "Red Letter" nights are usually the occasions of visits from distinguished guests, and serve the excellent purpose of permitting members to acquaint themselves with the views and personalities of leading lights in the gramophone world. The outstanding affair of the current session was undoubtedly the special meeting held on Wednesday, April 22nd, when a largely attended gathering assembled to welcome Mr. Compton Mackenzie, Editor of *THE GRAMOPHONE*, who had kindly consented to take the chair. The Liverpool Society were amongst the first to give official recognition to *THE GRAMOPHONE* on the publication of the first number, and the brightness, pungency and challenge of Mr. Mackenzie's journal have consistently held and fostered its first appeal. It was natural, therefore, that the Editor's visit should give rise to the keenest and most pleasurable anticipations, and these were more than realised. Mr. Mackenzie's frank and engaging manner and his quite infectious enthusiasm immediately won for him a most cordial reception. In a short address, brimful of ideas and of humour, and which touched the gramophonist at all points—his aspirations, his activities, his psychology, and even his foibles—Mr. Mackenzie made two points which specially appealed to the Liverpool Society. In expressing his friendly and sympathetic interest in the aims and work of the societies, Mr. Mackenzie advocated the desirability of perfectly free and honest discussion between members, and suggested that even severe differences of opinion, stated with candour and good feeling and received with toleration, gave vigour and usefulness to the Society movement. He also urged the necessity of avoiding a contented attitude of mind and declared that the modern instrument and record—admittedly excellent when compared with the products of ten or a dozen years ago—are not so near perfection that the good gramophonist may accept them with satisfied complacency. It must, he said, be ever borne in mind that the duty of the individual and the Society is to press for further improvements and refinements, and, by evincing a passion for perfection, fire the imagination and enterprise of the inventor and manufacturer.

The programme for the evening was provided by Mr. Cyril Davies, who presented a collection of German-made Polydor records played on an Orchorsol, both records and instrument being introduced at the Society's meetings for the first time. Mr. Davies once more proved that he has the gift for arranging a musical programme of an exceptionally attractive type. The Orchorsol, as is generally known, was the instrument to gain first honours at the test demonstration arranged by *THE GRAMOPHONE* and held a little while ago at Steinway Hall. That it failed to appeal to us Northerners quite as potently as it apparently did to our Southern friends does not imply that it did not prove deserving of nor receive high praise. The fact that but one make of record was used throughout the evening did not, perhaps, constitute the fairest as it certainly did not afford the most comprehensive trial. Indeed, the writer heard the opinion freely expressed that the records did not for the most part compare favourably with the best home products, though his personal view that they served to demonstrate the merits and defects of so many Teutonic performers—who leave little to be desired in their precise and "standardised" interpretations, but display less frequently any original conceptions and distinct and pleasing personality—may or may not find ready acceptance.

During the interval an extraordinary meeting of the Committee was convened and it was unanimously agreed to ask Mr. Compton Mackenzie to do us the honour of becoming Hon. President of the Society. Mr. Mackenzie, in a felicitous little speech, expressed the pleasure it gave him in accepting the office, and the Society is proud and happy to have had conferred upon it this added distinction.—J. W. HARWOOD, *Recording Secretary*.

**CARDIFF AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—The second meeting of the Society was held at the Foresters' Hall, Charles Street, on April 2nd, when Mr. Trevor Price, our Hon. Recording Secretary, gave a lecture-recital, "The Chain of Composers," under the chairmanship of Mr. N. O. Davies. Mr. Price took us back first of all to about the eighth century, when music existed in the form of melody only, any combination of "parts" being quite unknown; an example of an old Welsh folk-song, although familiar to all, proved again how rich a store of melody we have in our national song-books, and showed how easily these tunes could attract by the charm of sheer melody alone. When the primitive organ had been used to double the slow, sustained voice-parts in Church services, the idea suddenly came to man to accompany a "tone" by another melody at a fixed distance below it; this, when illustrated, sounded harsh and crude, but it was easy to see how the idea was developed and parts began to weave around each other. From this primitive counterpoint we jumped to the glorious sounds of the "Golden Age of Counterpoint," as exemplified by William Byrd, and we then progressed swiftly to Bach, "the magnificent line-draughtsman," and the delicious clarity of Haydn and Mozart. With the advent of Beethoven in the early nineteenth century came a new spirit in music, which for want of a better term we call "Romanticism." As Mr. Price pointed out, it is dangerous to attempt to draw a clean line of demarcation here; Mozart and Bach, for instance, are generally looked upon as "Classical" composers, yet the romantic spirit can be found in many examples of their work. Nevertheless, it is true that with the dawn of the nineteenth century music began to *mean* more, and to express a much greater range of emotions. We dwelt for some time with the romantic school, and then began to consider some more modern composers. The stark realism of *Pimen's Monologue* from *Boris Godounov* proved a startling contrast to the more mellifluous music which had preceded it. Again a contrast—the holy mysticism of César Franck; and, to conclude, a morsel of Elgar—not a very representative morsel, but still serving its purpose.

The following is a selection from the list of gramophone illustrations: Byrd, *Fantasia for String Sextet*; Bach, *Concerto for two violins, in D minor*; Mozart, *Symphony in G minor*; Beethoven, *Fifth Symphony*; Wagner, *Siegfried Idyll*; Moussorgsky, *Pimen's Monologue*; César Franck, *Sonata for violin and piano*; Elgar, "Cockaigne" *Overture*.

Mr. Price had a big task in attempting to deal in a single evening with the musical activity of three centuries, but he presented the whole period logically, and the programme and his comments were noteworthy for cohesion and homogeneity. Messrs. Dale Forty kindly supplied the Columbia Grafonola.

Very little reference is needed to Mr. H. L. Rink's visit on April 23rd. A frankly popular programme was presented, and was evidently hugely enjoyed by the large section of the public which attended. Anyway, we enrolled 14 new members, so we winced and were silent!—EVAN G. JONES, *Hon. Secretary*.

**SHEFFIELD GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.**—Mr. J. H. T. Holmes can always be relied on to submit for our acceptance a first-class programme, and the arrangements were in his hands on May 5th. Musically it left nothing to be desired, and in addition it was particularly interesting in that we were privileged to hear what is probably the first Orchorsol gramophone in Sheffield. Mr. Holmes has recently acquired the "C.12" model, and we had the opportunity to submit it to a close inspection. It is a well-finished instrument, embodying many original ideas and embellishments which undoubtedly qualify it to rank among the aristocrats of the gramophone world. Above all, however, from the tonal point of view it "delivers the goods." Such was the impression left with us after all classes of records had been demonstrated—from jazz to classical vocal items. The opinion seemed to be that it excelled on baritone and concerted vocal items; it was remarkably clear on the latter. Strangely enough it may not have been quite so good so far as, say, military band records were



concerned, but generally speaking, it left very little to be desired, and we predict for the Orchorsol wide popularity. Mr. Holmes possesses a very extensive library of records and those he played for us were of the best. We had Galli-Curci, Chaliapine, Clara Butt, Caruso, Stracciari in his wonderful *Largo al factotum*, New Queen's Hall Orchestra, etc., etc., and mention must be made of the excellent Parlophone record *Polish Dance*, by the Edith Lorand Orchestra. We should say it is one of the finest records extant, of its kind, and would be difficult to beat for sheer "go" and "snap." On behalf of the crowded audience present Mr. Holmes was heartily thanked in fitting terms by Mr. Thompson for the good fare provided and the trouble he had taken.

Will all members please note that our next meeting will be held on June 9th, and not on June 2nd, as per syllabus.—T. H. BROOKS, *Hon. Press Secretary*.

**BRADFORD AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.**—A meeting of the Society was held on April 22nd, 1925, in the Society's room, for members and friends, Mr. H. Watson (Vice-President) in the chair. The programme was in the hands of Mr. W. Hodgson, one of our members. The maeline, a cabinet model with large horn, made of copper and brass, of his own design and construction. The programme consisted of brass and military bands, of which this splendid horn brought out the brass instruments truthfully with plenty of volume. Some twenty-four records were played, and the outstanding features were:—Bands: *Conqueror March* (Zono.), *Home Guards*; *Bradford* (Zono.), *Besses o' th' Barn*; *Caprico Espagnol* (H.M.V.), *Coldstream Guards*; *Fanfare March of Silver Trumpets* (H.M.V.), *Coldstream Guards*; *Duet, Albion on thy fertile plains* (Zono.), *Pike and Dawson*; *L'Elisir d'Amore* (H.M.V.), E. Caruso. *The Mighty Deep* (Col.), N. Allin; *Vesti la giubba* (Col.), Ulysses Lappas. A humorist record which caused much merriment was *I belong to Glasgow*, Will Fyffe, among others, which was much appreciated. At the close a hearty vote of thanks on a motion by Mr. Watson was enthusiastically applauded, which ended a most pleasant and enjoyable entertainment.—M. GLEDSTONE, *Hon. Secretary*.

**RICHMOND AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—Lectures have been the outstanding feature of the Society's activities during the season, and one which was awaited with considerable interest took place on Monday, April 20th, at the Free Library Cottage, Richmond Green. Mr. C. C. Norman, Vice-President of this Society, the lecturer, chose for his subject "The Gramophone and its Accessories." In opening, Mr. Norman stated that he considered himself to be in a particularly fortunate position, for he doubted whether any topic could be reviewed so completely without wearying the audience than that which came under the comprehensive title, The Gramophone. The stimulating effect to those who chose to understand its merits was important, but then only by the most careful discrimination in the matter of choice of records and gramophone. In musical circles it was generally regarded as a most potent educational factor in that the majority of the masters had contributed and thus placed on record for all time the power of their musical genius. Many other points were alluded to by the lecturer and illustrated by instrumental and vocal, classical and popular music by composers of various countries. Mr. Norman was accorded a hearty vote of thanks for the interesting and informative nature of the lecture, the preparation of which had doubtless taken considerable time. The Parlophone Co., Ltd., have kindly contributed six more records for the library.—T. SYDNEY ALLEN, *Hon. Press Secretary*.

**DEWSBURY AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—The second meeting of the above Society was held at the Church House, Church Street, Dewsbury, on Tuesday, April 21st, when the programme was kindly given by Mr. H. Pritchard, of Batley. Mr. G. H. Hirst, of Dewsbury, presided. The following are a few of the records worthy of special mention: *Songs of the Sea*, Robert Radford and Ivor Foster; *Ruslan a Ludmila*, Symphony Orchestra; *Sea Pictures*, Leila Regana; *No. 39 in E flat*, London Symphony Orchestra; *Early one Morning*, Labette (Dora); *Suite, Old English Dances*, H.M. Coldstream Guards.

The evening was concluded with a special vote of thanks to the organiser, Mr. H. Pritchard, for his excellent programme and the manner in which he described each record. To readers who follow musical matters it will doubtless be of interest to learn the functions of this newly-formed Society, and it is hoped that many new members may be welcomed into the ranks. Persons interested in the above will be supplied with further particulars, if application is made to the Secretary, 2, Clement Terrace, Savile Town, Dewsbury.—K. WALKER, *Hon. Secretary*.

**MANCHESTER GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—At the April meeting of this Society our members were once again favoured with a recital by our ever-enthusiastic President, Mr. J. Rastall. The programme ranged from jazz and popular items to the more austere classics of Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart, so the various tastes of our members were amply catered for. Amongst the numerous excellent items which Mr. Rastall demonstrated upon his own H.M.V. instrument, special mention should be made of the *Waldstein Sonata* for pianoforte, played by Lamond; *When Evening's Twilight*, by the Century Male Quartette; *Caro mio Ben*, by Phyllis Lett; *Ophelia's Ballad* from *Hamlet*, by Scotney; a trio from *Madam Butterfly* (*Dovunque al mondo*), sung by Hislop, Dinh Gilly, and Parius; and Tchaikovsky's *Symphonic Poem, Francisca da Rimini*. The first record was noteworthy because of its remarkably fine tone and faithfulness to the original. The enunciation in the second record was unusually clear, the voices blending in perfect harmony to a chiming accompaniment, which sounded most pleasing. The Phyllis Lett record found much favour by reason of its vocal purity and a very fine organ accompaniment. Scotney displayed remarkable vocal powers and brilliance in the *Hamlet* record, while in the *Butterfly* trio Hislop's magnificent voice came out with great dramatic force. Tchaikovsky's *Francisca* is quite the best orchestral item which we have heard for a long time, the reproduction as well as the playing being of a very realistic order. Of the other items demonstrated, Evan Williams sounded rather nasal in a rendering of *Sound an Alarm*, and Norman Allin in *I am a Roamer* obviously compares unfavourably with Malcolm McEachern. A series of Kreisler records, while being quite satisfactory in an artistic way, proved to have a rather pronounced wood-wind flavour, and in this respect it may be said that generally Kreisler's records compare unfavourably with those of Elman and Heifetz. Mr. Rastall used fibre needles almost exclusively, and, speaking broadly, one might say that the reproduction was very good indeed, though here and there it was apparent by the breakdown of the point, that this type of stylus has its strict limitations as well as its advantages. In other directions the demonstration proved by the wonderful fidelity of Lamond's piano records that great strides have been made in the art of reproducing pianoforte solos, while in so far as the violin is concerned very little real progress has been made during recent years. If Mr. Rastall's audience was not large, it certainly was attentive and appreciative, and at the close of the meeting the members expressed their gratitude to Mr. Rastall in the form of a very hearty vote of thanks.—G. GRAHAM.

**CANTERBURY AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—The meeting held at Gaywood's Rooms, on April 15th, took the form of a demonstration of the latest Parlophone records, kindly sent to us by the Parlophone Co. The members were agreeably surprised at the excellence of tone, especially of the *Surprise Symphony* (Haydn) and the 'cello solos, *Rondo, Op. 94* (Dvorák) and *Serenade, Op. 54* (Popper), played by Emanuel Feuermann. The *Carmen* records were really good, although the flute portions were rather too faint in parts, the *Smugglers' Chorus* being rather disappointing by reason of this fact. The records were for incorporation in our lending library, and the librarian was noticeably busy with Parlophone records after the meeting. On the whole, these latest issues are splendid value, and though, perhaps owing to the inclement weather, the attendance was rather poor, those present expressed their appreciation of an enjoyable evening spent.—S. F. WAKE, *Hon. Secretary*.

**THE BRIXTON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—April Meeting: The members' programme was given by Mr. Sterry, which was of a high-class general nature, reflecting great credit on Mr. Sterry's good taste. The machine show was to be given by the E.M.G. Gramophone Company, but was postponed until the May meeting. The second of the technical talks was given by Mr. Webb, the subject being "Sound-boxes," and this was greatly enjoyed by the audience. A number of Parlophone records were run over, which proved up to usual high standard of this company, so good are the Parlophones that the writer recommends this make to the man with a first-class taste in music and a second-class income. The above society is now in the best position it has reached since its inception, in numbers, finance, and domicile; this is mainly due to the energetic officials who have been carefully chosen by our President, Mr. Mackenzie, who is a real society official, not being like some presidents, who walk about looking very dignified. Among a large number present was noticed Mr. Porte, who is a well-known writer in musical journals.

May Meeting:—The E.M.G. gramophone was demonstrated at our May meeting by its proprietor, Mr. E. M. Ginn. The repro-



duction was excellent in its quality, being very full and open, showing to advantage with use of fibre needles. A lady member, Mrs. Gedye, had charge of the programme, and confined her efforts solely to a nicely arranged list of instrumental and light orchestral works, the following being a selection:—*Simple Aveu* (Thorne); *Meditation*, *Thais* (Massenet), Elman; *Minuet* (Beethoven), Zimbalist; *Sylvia Ballet* (Delibes), R.A.H. Orchestra; *Suite*, *Merchant of Venice* (Rosse), Mayfair Orchestra; and *Rhapsody in Blue* (Gershwin), Whiteman's Orchestra, the last being serious (?) music for the modern dance orchestra. After the interval Mr. Ginn took charge, demonstrating records by Huberman, Lamond, and McEachern, preceded by a chat in which the salient points of the instrument were brought to our notice. Mr. Ginn was cordially thanked for his successful demonstration of an undeniably fine instrument. During the interval a selection of Parlophone records were played, the best being Strauss' *Don Juan*. Please address enquiries to Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. T. Fisher, 28a, Fieldhouse Road, Balham, S.W. 12.—S. N. COLLINS, *Recording Secretary*.

**NORTH-WEST GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—At the meeting held on Sunday, May 10th, 1925, all the recordings of the *Prayer* from *Tosca* were heard. These gave the impression of being very poor and thin. A notable exception was the record by Jeanne Brola (H.M.V. 03449). This stood head and shoulders above the others, both as regards recording and expression, the English diction being remarkably good. It would be interesting to know, if permissible, why the Gramophone Company delete so many good records from their catalogue and still preserve so much rubbish. The Scarpia records by Formichi (Columbia) provide some very fine examples of straight baritone singing. Two versions of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* provided a contrasting variety and went a long way to show how difficult it is to get a perfect recording of choral work. The Parlophone Company are to be congratulated on their efforts, providing us with some really worthy records of good music at a reasonable price.—V. W. RUSSELL FORBES.

**THE NORTH LONDON GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.**—On Saturday, May 9th, a well-attended meeting was presided over by Mr. L. Ivory (Hon. Chairman), when our members, Mr. C. W. Hardisty and Mr. W. J. B. Howe, put before the audience a most varied and entertaining programme of records from the H.M.V., Columbia, Brunswick, Vocalion, Beka, Zono., and Parlo. catalogues. Here we had a well-balanced variety of classical and popular subjects which was thoroughly appreciated. Some of the outstanding features of Mr. Hardisty's programme were:—*Tancredi Overture*, Beka Meister Orchestra (Beka). *Andante Religioso* (Thomé), Squire ('cello); *Caliph of Bagdad* (Boieldieu), London Symphony Orchestra; *Guitarre* (Moszkowski), Bratza, violin (Columbia). *La calunnia è un Venticello*, *Barber of Seville* Chaliapine (bass); *Agnus Dei* (Bizet), Madame Schumann Heink, contralto; *Sonata in C major* (Beethoven), Mark Hambourg, piano; *The lass with the delicate air* (Arne), Virginia Rea, soprano (Brunswick). *O Mimi, tu più non torni*, *La Bohème*, Lenghi Cellini and George Baker, duet (Vocalion). Mr. Howe's *Barber of Seville Overture*, Grenadier Guards Band (Columbia); *Every Valley*, *Messiah*, S. Coltham, tenor (Zono). *Pirates of Penzance*, Light Opera Orchestra; *Polonaise*, *Mignon*, Tetrizzini; *Caprice Viennois*, Kriesler, violin; *Andante Cantabile* (Tchaikovsky), Elman Quartette (H.M.V.). And last but not least, the Parlophone laughing record entitled *The Kruschen Feeling*, furnished a fitting finale. Three new members were elected, and the vote of thanks to Messrs. Hardisty and Howe, proposed by Mr. Ivory, was unanimously carried.—WM. J. ROBINS, *Hon. Recording Secretary*.

**EALING RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETY.**—A very interesting meeting was held in Benstead's Audition Salon, Uxbridge Road, West Ealing, W. 13, on Thursday evening, May 7th. Mr. Godfrey and Mr. Fair supplied the programme, intercepted with some new issues. All records were well received and the two members were accorded a hearty vote of thanks. Mr. Ross, the Chairman, announced a competition for the June meeting, a prize of a 6s. 6d. record for the best vocal and the same for the best instrumental. Records for entry to cost not more than 4s. 6d.

**THE SOUTH-EAST LONDON RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETY.**—The April meeting of the above Society, held at the Clock Tower Chambers, Lewisham, a week earlier than usual, owing to the Easter holidays, was again largely attended to listen to a lecture-demonstration by our Secretary, Mr. E. Baker, his subject being "Instrumental Music." The first part of the programme was devoted to the pianoforte for various reasons which he explained,

and in tracing the development of that instrument he traced the growth of instrumental music, dealing chiefly with the period of Purcell and his harpsichord compositions to that of Romanticism, which period was covered by the records. He pointed out the great beauty in Purcell's compositions, took gramophonists to task for their neglect of such works, and judging by the three pieces which were played by Miss Scharrer, it is fair to assume that many had their eyes (and ears) opened. Mr. Baker dealt at length with the capabilities of the pianoforte, drawing on Schumann for his purpose. The last movement of his *Concerto in A minor*, Op. 54, illustrated how it could vie with the orchestra, and how brilliantly it could be used. Incidentally this piece was utilised to illustrate "Rondo" form, Mr. Baker pulling it to pieces and playing the various sections separately before playing it right through. Then Schumann's *Carnaval* was used to illustrate all the many types of composition which it covers, and selecting various tunes from the work, Mr. Baker commented on the nature and ideas underlying.

In part 2 of the programme the violin, viola, and 'cello came in for attention, their capabilities and their music being briefly dealt with. For his purpose Mr. Baker used *Chaconne* (Vitali), Sammons; *Come, sweet death* (Bach-Tertis), Tertis; and *Tarantella in G minor* (Popper), Suggia.

At the next meeting, May 11th, Mr. Baker dealt with "Haydn, Mozart, and the Orchestra." Visitors are welcomed, but would oblige by communicating first with the Secretary, 128, Erlanger Road, New Cross, S.E. 4.—ED. C. COXALL.

**EAST LONDON GRAMOPHONIC SOCIETY.**—The eighty-sixth monthly meeting, which incidentally was the sixth annual general meeting, was held at headquarters, Langthorne Restaurant, on Saturday, April 18th, 1925. The usual business attached to annual general meetings was gone into, and Mr. C. W. Palmer was elected President, Mr. Harley Chairman, Mr. Worley Hon. Secretary, and Mr. Pritlove Hon. Financial Secretary. The balance sheet showed the Society to be in a stable condition, although, as remarked by the Hon. Secretary in his report, there was still room for improvement by the addition of many more members. (Wake up, East London gramophone enthusiasts!) Many little points were discussed and a general feeling of great enthusiasm was prevalent amongst those members present, and there is every reason to believe that the coming 1925-6 season will be a successful one.

After refreshments had been taken the members settled themselves to enjoy a programme comprised of records selected from the April issues. Orchestral records included *Don Juan* (Strauss), a symphonic tone-poem complete on Parlophone records Nos. 10254-5, and Beethoven's *Eighth Symphony* (Parlophone E.10256-8). Mr. Cunningham gave a few interesting introductory notes on the former work, and the Hon. Secretary a nutshell biography of Beethoven. The Opera House Orchestra in these records still retain their high standard of orchestration. Vocal records included Chaliapine, Hempel, John Coates, Rosing, and Topliss Green. Space will not permit to criticise individually the records by these singers, but special mention must be made of the excellent singing of *The Pretty Creature* by John Coates (Vocalion B.3118).—W. J. WORLEY, *Hon. Secretary*.

**THE SOUTH LONDON GRAMOPHONIC SOCIETY.**—A large meeting on April 25th came to give an oral test to the new invention recently launched by the Gramophone Co. the Pleated Diaphragm. A detailed analysis is not needed here, as illustrations and letterpress exist already, but the absence of the tone-arm as generally understood and the expansion of the sound-box into a pleated circular disc of some 11 inches in diameter indicate the nature of the departures from familiar practice. The effect is somewhat fuller than obtained usually, approaching more nearly to the combination of the No. 2 box on a pedestal instrument, but there is no suggestion of tubbiness, that bugbear of experimenters. (Incidentally the No. 2 sound-box mentioned above was not designed for use with the horn type of machine.) In approaching the question of the reproduction of the 26 items kindly provided by the Gramophone Company, it is, unfortunately, impossible to mention more than a few, owing to lack of space, but the following are selected from an annotated programme as being of particular interest:—(a) *Overture*, *Magic Flute*, Mayfair Orchestra; (b) violin, Schubert's *Ave Maria*, J. Heifetz; (c) 'cello, *Sarabande* and *Allemande*, Cedric Sharpe; (d) chorus and orchestra, *Salmodia*, *Mefistofele* (Boito), Symphony Orchestra and Chorus; (e) tenor, *Ombra mai fu*, Caruso; (f) soprano, *Divinités du Styx*, Alceste, M. Jeritza; (g) trio from *Lombardi*, Caruso-Journet-Alda. This is essentially the type of instrument for concerts and demonstrations owing to equal diffusion of the sound waves, there being no cone of sound.—S. F. D. HOWARTH, *Reporting Secretary*.



## TRADE WINDS

### Victor Records

A list of "the pick of the Victor Catalogue" (that is of records not included in H.M.V. catalogues) is issued by the Gramophone Exchange, 29 and 31, New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1, and should be kept by all our readers who are interested. It costs 1s.. It is particularly strong in orchestral records (Philadelphia Symphony, New York Philharmonic, &c.) and has alluring records by such singers as Mabel Garrison, Frances Alda, Dusolina Giannini, Maria Jeritza, Rosa Ponselle, Schumann-Heink, Julia Culp and a host of others. The prices, are of course, higher than H.M.V., but not much (though the misprint of 66s. for a Gigli 10in. is staggering). The majority are celebrity records at 9s. 3d. for a 12in. and 6s. 6d. for a 10in.

### Fauré Memorial Concert

A number of artists well-known in the gramophone world—such as Kirkby Lunn, William Murdoch, Albert Sammons, Lionel Tertis, Cedric Sharpe and Alfred Cortot—will be taking part in the Fauré Memorial concert at the Wigmore Hall on June 9th, Tuesday, 2.45 p.m. Since the entire proceeds will be sent as England's tribute to the committee for the monument to be erected in Paris, it is an opportunity to combine enjoyment with a glow of generosity, and to do honour to the memory of a popular as well as distinguished composer.

### The London Dailies and the Gramophone

Why is it that none of the London daily press has made an effort to emulate the unique position of the *Daily Telegraph* in the matter of gramophone notes? Probably every reader of THE GRAMOPHONE likes to hear what Mr. Robin Legge has to say on the second Saturday of each month—and indeed on every Saturday of the month; but up to the present he is the only musical critic who is given sufficient space to deal adequately with the matters which interest gramophonists. In the provinces it is another matter.

### Another Celebrity

Platitudes throng the mind when one reflects on the importance of gramophone records as advance agents for singers and instrumentalists. As we glance through the programme of the Covent Garden season or through the lists of concerts that are to be given, many of the names leap to the eye as those of old friends, though we may never have seen the singer; but since the recording wax is a treacherous test, we always wonder whether the singer is better or worse than the record. How will it be with Luella Melius, the latest prize of the H.M.V. celebrity list? Few of us can have heard her sing—and yet she is "generally considered the foremost coloratura soprano in Europe." So far as gramophonists are concerned, she will be up against some pretty strong competitors for that title; but rumour says that her "golden voice" has recorded magnificently, and we can only wait and hear, for ourselves.

### Forty Per Cent.

The prosperity of the Columbia Graphophone Company, with its final dividend for the year of 12½ per cent. and bonus of 20 per cent., making a total distribution of 40 per cent. for the year, is a matter of sincere congratulation. Considering the preponderance of Columbia records in our Middle-Priced Records competition, it would be rather churlish to suggest that some of the immense profits might be risked next year—it is not a big risk—in a reduction of the prices of records.

### The New Recording

There was something premature about the announcement in the press of the new method of electrical recording by the Gramophone Company. The public, wanting to know more—or else nothing at all—naturally wondered whether it would be prudent to buy any more records at all in the meantime. Electrical record-

ing by means of microphones has been "in the air" for some time; observant people thought they noticed an experiment in the Thibaud-Cortot records of the Franck Sonata. But while we have no information upon which to excite, dismay or reassure our readers, we should guess that the American importation is just one more definite step forward in the evolution of recording, and that it will be a long time before records made by this method will permeate the present catalogues. In fact we counsel "Business as usual" and await developments.

### Brighter Brighton

"Flâneurlet" writes: "The solution of the *Do you know this shop?* competition, left me unmoved, because I have no knowledge of Liverpool; but it is surprising why lots of other shops were not added to your list by readers. For instance, how was Lyon & Hall's place at Brighton overlooked? It answers the description almost perfectly, and is run on admirable lines: pianos, player-pianos, gramophones, etc., and a recital of the new records, with comments by Mr. Phillips, every month; and he is an enthusiastic follower of our paper. So is Mr. Simms, of St. James's Street, one of the alertest men in the trade, who invents diaphragms and amplifiers in his spare time and does big business in a small shop, especially with Orchorsols and Parlophone records. But why, why have we no gramophone society in Brighton?"

Why, indeed? "Flâneurlet" should call himself "Peplet" and ginger up Brighton. He might easily win the Circulation Competition.



## REPORT ON THE APOLLO SUPER IV. GRAMOPHONE

THE following, by our committee of experts, is a short version of a report which has been furnished to the makers. The original report contained some fuller recommendations on technical matters which, we understand, the makers are adopting.

"The tone-arm, which is of a goose-neck type with a continuous taper and avoidance of sharp bends, is designed to give accurate track alignment. The error is nowhere greater than about 2°. We congratulate the makers on being amongst the first gramophone manufacturers to achieve this desirable result. In order to obtain the greatest value from this design two things are of importance. The neck should work freely on its axis, and the height of the tone-arm should be accurately adjusted so that in the playing position the sound-box is vertical, viewed edgewise, and at the proper playing angle with the neck horizontal. We understand that the makers are giving special attention to these points. The motor is one which we can thoroughly recommend. It is smooth and steady in running, silky in wind, and has a substantial reserve of power. If by any chance it should ever get out of order it is easily adjusted and restored to perfect running condition.

In our tests at the London office we found the amplification very good indeed. The reproduction is forward and un-muted and the sound diffuses well. The excellence of the Apollo in this respect is all the more noteworthy since it is here that most gramophones of the internal horn type fail.

The particular sound-box attached to the machine was not, according to our tastes, a good one of its class. It was certainly not a specially selected box, and happened to be one of rather hard tonal quality. We do not, however, wish to stress this point since one of us had previously heard the Apollo at the London office with another sound-box of the same pattern and was then much impressed by the quality of tone. We understand that the makers are taking steps to ensure that the standard of this second box shall be maintained by all sound-boxes sent out with the Super IV.

On the whole, we consider that those intending to purchase a gramophone would do well to take an opportunity of hearing the Apollo Super IV. before making their choice. It has several decided advantages to commend it and its price is very reasonable."



## DANCE NOTES

By Richard Herbert

IT has become more evident than ever, this month, that it is time somebody invented a new dance or at least evolved something new from the bones and skeletons of the comparatively old dances that are moribund and neglected. The figures that I have made a custom of printing from month to month give plenty of evidence that this is true, unless, of course, there are people who are content to become mono-steppists, and that I think is hardly desirable and not in the least probable. The tango has almost disappeared, or is disappearing, except in the haunts of the enthusiasts in such places as the Washington Hotel and the Empress Rooms—and there is no new record. Why is it, I wonder, that people regard it with such diffidence and expect to find it *very* difficult to dance? When a band strikes up a tango there seems usually to descend upon the assembled company the most terrifying symptoms of awe, and the now gregarious mob shuffles off its coil of reason and descends once more to a primitive fear of the unknown and apparently almost unknowable. It is right, because of its peculiar rhythm, that the tango should inspire a *different* atmosphere from that produced by the other dances, and I will not deny that it is a subtle, perhaps soporific, and almost hypnotic one, but let us not lose altogether the chance of experiencing this queer mixture of sensations. So get rid of this inhibition and learn the tango! Then there is the blues: now as dead as a door-nail. It was never a dance that was popular in the true sense of the word because it involved a kind of gymnastics in which it is not everybody who wishes to indulge, or feels himself capable of indulging. It was a dance of extremes, and such a dance will always fail comparatively quickly. At the present moment it is the one-step that appears to be on its last legs, or perhaps I should say *leg*. Blues records long ago ceased to be issued, and the one-step now threatens to become extinct, that is if one can judge of these things from the number of records that are issued from month to month by the gramophone companies. One tune only is recorded and that is already familiar—\*\**Kongo Kate* (Columbia 3621, 10in., 3s.). If there lurks in any reader's mind the opinion that I am merely prejudiced against the one-step because I have talked of it a little scornfully in my notes from time to time, I crave for treatment that has more justice in it. I have given the one-step every reasonable chance, including dancing it in half-time, which simply means fox-trotting to it, and I have now vowed never to dance it again unless it is radically altered. The waltz survives in spite of all the adverse criticism which is showered upon it from every side, and personally I have no doubt that it will always have many devotees. It is too deeply rooted in tradition to disappear now, and, after all, so much of the best dance music that we possess is in waltz time, that to lose it would be serious if for that reason alone. Yet the fact remains that for some inscrutable reason the waltz is alien to modern dancing. I know that I may bring down a storm of abuse upon my head for saying this, but it is a fact that is undeniable if it is pondered upon for even a moment. What can be done about it? Well, that is a question that applies to modern ball-room dancing as a whole, and it rests with the teachers to find a solution and with the bands to co-operate whenever they possibly can. I should have expected some well-defined development before now, if only for the reason that the teaching profession must be experiencing rather a lean time; for most people at least *think* that they can dance the fox-trot, and many consider themselves insulted if they are given the very salutary advice of paying for a few lessons in order to attain *perfection*, for on this dangerous subject that is what one must say if one dares to volunteer advice at all. To conclude my statistics: Fifteen waltz tunes are recorded this month and eighty fox-trots. Thus the fox-trot has a greater monopoly than ever.

Most of the waltzes that I have listened to are of the older type, but up to the time of writing—for press day is earlier than usual this month—some of the H.M.V. records have failed to arrive, with the result that I have not yet heard any by the Savoy Havana Band, which seldom fails to please those who prefer syncopated waltzes to the other kind. There are two 12in. records that are particularly pleasing, and both are by bands with big reputations. It is difficult to discriminate when both are so good, but on the whole I prefer \*\**Violetta* and *Reigen*, both played by Marek Weber and his famous orchestra (Parlophone E.10277, 12in., 4s. 6d.). The first described as *valse lente*, is dreamy and enchanting, and almost inspiring; it has a beautiful violin part and might aptly be described as a waltz for the connoisseur.

*Reigen* is spirited, although a little sorrowful, and has an entrancing opening with the 'cello. The Parlophone Company describe it as a *Valse Boston*. \*\**Twirling Millions* and *Carnival Children*, the two tunes on the other record, are played by the Geiger Orchestra (Columbia 9032, 12in., 4s. 6d.). *Carnival Children* is the better of the two, but both are played with real feeling. There is another Parlophone record that is particularly pleasing (E.5358, 10in., 2s. 6d.), \*\**Passione* and *Wedding Bells*. *Passione* reminds one of old times, that at least is the sentiment, *Wedding Bells* calls in the new. Both are divinely played, without any superfluous conceit, by the Edith Lorand Orchestra, a little quietly and perhaps suited best for the *dance intime*. Three of the remaining waltzes come from the Columbia Company, which is responsible for five out of this month's total of fifteen. \*\**That Soothing Melody* is slow, rhythmical and melodious; *Lover's Waltz* thoughtful and almost solemn. Both are played by the Hannan Dance Band (Col. 3617, 10in., 3s.). The New Princes Toronto Orchestra gives us \*\**Sometime*, which is on the reverse side of *Kongo Kate*, the one-step mentioned above (Col. 3621, 10in., 3s.). *Sometime* has become a familiar friend and a new record played with such good rhythm would always be welcome. Finally mention must be made of a record issued by the Murdoch Trading Company, better known as Beltona. This is the first time that dance records have arrived from that source since they have been dealt with by me, and they are welcome. The record in question now consists of \*\**Roses from the South* and *Artist's Life*. It is not very suitable for dancing, but is notable for the beautiful playing of the Sutherland Dance Orchestra and is worth buying on that account.

The fox-trots are rather more difficult to select because selection is so much wider, and it happens that on this occasion there is no record that stands head and shoulders above the rest. First I am tempted to mention a record that combines two of my particular favourites, \*\**Titina* and *Nola*. The former is played by the Moulin Rouge Orchestra and the latter by Sam Lanin's Orchestra, and the record is *Imperial 1421, 10in., 2s.*—wonderful value for the money. My remarks about these tunes in my notes last month brought me a letter from the Parlophone Company, who pointed out that both tunes were issued by them some months ago, in fact before the present writer was in the habit of watching the new arrivals so closely, and, unhappily, unknown to him at the time. How it was that the tunes did not become more popular then it is difficult to understand. However, here they are, both to be had for the very modest sum of two shillings. This *Titina* is played slightly faster than the Vocalion record of the same name, is pitched higher, becoming almost a little strident sometimes, and in addition to this possesses a vocal accompaniment which is quite good as such things go—although personally I would rather be without it. The *Nola* is a rather better performance, although not quite so good as the H.M.V. record issued two months ago. Nevertheless, let me say once again, this is excellent value for the money and both are jolly good tunes. It is appropriate since Vincent Lopez is now here in England that a record made by his Hotel Pennsylvania Orchestra is the first choice from this month's new tunes—\*\**Madeline* and *Will you remember me?* (Parlo. E.5354, 10in., 2s. 6d.). *Madeline* is not the kind of tune that sticks in one's head, and we shall have to wait until further records of it appear before it will be possible to say how much credit in this case should go to the band. The whole effect is certainly very good. It is played rhythmically, in perfect time, with a good volume of noise, suggesting perfect orchestration. *Will you remember me* is more notable for its melody, but both tunes are played with incomparable verve. *Vocalion X.9563, 10in., 3s.*, falls little below the standard set by *Madeline*. In playing \*\**My daddy's dreamtime lullaby* and *He's the kind of a man*, the London Band gives an apt demonstration of how exactly to play a tune so that the accompaniment is easily followed for its rhythm without one losing sight of the melody. Incidentally this is the best record of the first-named tune, which is one that has more originality than possessed by most nowadays. Jack Hylton has added to his big reputation by very good renderings of two previously unrecorded tunes, \*\**Leander*, from "Katja the Dancer," and *Dublinola*, from "Better Days" (H.M.V. B.2009, 10in., 3s.), and \*\**Come a little closer* and *Couldn't we keep on dancing* (H.M.V. B.2003, 10in., 3s.). The Savoy Orpheans likewise give us an excellent version of perhaps the best tune from "Rose Marie," \*\**Totem Tom Tom*. I prophesy greater popularity for this than has already been won by *Rose Marie* and *Indian Love Call*. The reverse side of the record is occupied by *When you and I were Seventeen*, characteristic Savoy Orphean orchestration and a very typical seventeen. But why not cut out the trumpet? This record is H.M.V. B.2002, 10in., 3s. Then there is a 12in. Parlophone, incidentally the only



12in. fox-trot (E.10276, 12in., 4s. 6d.).—\*\**The girl you are with belongs to me* and *Je vous aime*, both played by Marek Weber in his own inimitable way. The first, which is quiet and slow, seems like a voice from the past; the second is a typical French tune for which one could almost make up a complete dance without repetition. But I am afraid Marek Weber is not for everybody if there are still those who crave for muted trumpets and laughing saxophones. \*\**Oh, Mabel*, which appears now for the first time, is best recorded by the Sunny South Orchestra (Beltona 756, 10in., 2s. 6d.). This and *Tell her in the Springtime*, by the same band, are both played with plenty of verve, which will excuse a fault such as stridency, which it is otherwise difficult to pardon. Another Beltona record that is specially worthy of mention is \*\**Why couldn't it be poor little me?* and *I'll see you in my dreams* (757, 10in., 2s. 6d.), both played by the Southern States Dance Band. Finally there are two Columbia records that cannot be left out. The first is \*\**All alone*, played by Paul Specht and his Orchestra, and *No wonder that I love you*, played by the Hannan Dance Band (3635, 10in., 3s.)—there are no cave-man tactics here, but merely pretty persuasion—and \*\**Alabama Bound* and *Me Neenyah*, both played by the Hannan Dance Band. The former impressionistic and at times almost realistic, like *Me Neenyah*, wears very well, the reason being that they both have originality, and this prevents one's mind from wandering off to something else.

The following is a list of those records, all fox-trots except when mentioned, which are too many to mention individually, although by no means without good points, starred according to their relative merits. The asterisks in the course of the article have been inserted to draw attention to the names of those records mentioned there which together form the pick of the bunch.

#### ZONOPHONE (10in., 2s. 6d.).

- 2561.—\*\**Jealous* and \**I've got a feeling for Ophelia* (both played by Max Darewski's Dance Band).

#### VOCALION (10in., 3s.).

- X.9565.—\*\**I want to be happy* and *Rose of the Moonlight* (both played by Geoffrey Goodhart and his Orchestra).  
X.9566.—\**I like pie—I like cake* and \**The only, only one* (both played by Geoffrey Goodhart).  
X.9568.—\*\**Indian love call* and \**Rose Marie* (both played by the London Band).

#### PARLOPHONE (10in., 3s.).

- E.5353.—\**Naughty baby* and \*\**Wait a bit, Susie* (both played by the Marlborough Dance Orchestra).  
E.5355.—\*\**Shanghai* and \**Alabama bound* (both played by the Marlborough Dance Orchestra).  
E.5357.—\**Tokio Blues* and \**Tell her in the spring-time* (both played by the Melody Sheiks).

#### IMPERIAL (10in., 2s.).

- 1417.—\**Rose Marie* (the Golden Gate Orchestra) and \**Indian love call* (The Bar Harbour Society Orchestra).  
1418.—\**Will you remember me?* (The Imperial Dance Orchestra) and *Oh! Mabel* (The Golden Gate Orchestra).  
1419.—\**At the end of the road* (Ben Selvin and his Orchestra) and *Blue-eyed Sally* (The Golden Gate Orchestra).  
1420.—\**Peter Pan, I love you* (The Imperial Dance Orchestra) and \**Alabama Bound* (Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra).

#### H.M.V. (10in., 3s.).

- B.2010.—\**Garden of lies* and \**The big tune* (both played by Jack Hylton and his Orchestra).

#### COLUMBIA (10in., 3s.).

- 3616.—\**Because they all love you* and *On the Z-R-3* (both played by the Hannan Dance Band).  
3618.—\**Everybody loves my baby* and \*\**Oh, Flo!* (both played by the Hannan Dance Band).  
3622.—\**You can take me from Dixie* and \*\**Melody* (both played by the New Prince's Toronto Orchestra).

#### BRUNSWICK (10in., 3s.).

- 2759.—\**Rose Marie* and \**Take a little one-step* (both played by Carl Fenton's Orchestra).

#### BELTONA (10in., 2s. 6d.).

- 738.—\**Rose Marie* and \*\**Indian love call* (both played by the Avenue Dance Orchestra).  
744.—\**Show me the way to go home* and \**My daddy's dreamtime lullaby* (both played by the Avenue Dance Orchestra).  
755.—\**One million times a day* and \**At the end of the road* (both played by the Avenue Dance Orchestra).

#### ACO (10in., 2s. 6d.).

- G.15652.—\**Rose Marie* and \**Indian love call* (both played by the Old Virginians).  
G.15671.—\**At the end of the road* and \*\**My daddy's dreamtime lullaby* (both played by Jeffries and his Rialto Orchestra).  
G.15672.—\*\**Tell her in the spring-time* and \**I'll see you in my dreams* (both played by the Ohio Novelty Band).

The list which follows consists of the best of the records which have arrived too late for anything except a very cursory examination.

#### COLUMBIA (10in., 3s.).

- 3642.—\*\**Pretty things* (from *Rose Marie*) and \*\**Totem Tom-tom* (from *Rose Marie*).  
3652.—\**You're near and yet so far* and \**At the end of the road*.  
3653.—\**Suite 16* and *Don't put the blame on me*.  
3654.—\*\**When my sugar walks down the street* and *Too tired* (both vocal).  
3655.—\**When the one you love loves you* (vocal) and \*\**Listening* (both waltzes).  
3656.—\**Nobody knows what a red-head mamma can do* and *San Francisco* (vocal).  
3657.—\**Back in Hackensack, New Jersey* and \**Who is the one that you are fooling now?*  
3658.—\**Sleepy Hawaii* and *Come back to Samoa* (both waltzes). (All the above are played by the Hannan Dance Band.)

#### H.M.V. (10in., 3s.).

- B.1996.—\**Too tired* (vocal) and \*\**Oriental moon* (both played by the Savoy Orpheans).  
B.1997.—\**Show me the way to go home* and *Bygone days* (both vocal and played by the Savoy Havana Band).  
B.2001.—\*\**Take a little one-step* (The International Novelty Orchestra) and \**No one knows what it's all about* (Jack Shilkret's Orchestra).  
B.2007.—\**Lucky Kentucky* and \*\**In love with love* (both played by Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra).  
B.2012.—\*\**Listening* and \*\**Love's dream* (both waltzes and played by the Savoy Orpheans).  
B.2013.—\**When my sugar walks down the street* (vocal, played by the Savoy Havana Band) and *Nobody knows what a red-head Mamma can do* (Savoy Orpheans).  
B.2014.—\**San Francisco* and *Love's lottery* (both vocal and played by the Savoy Havana Band).  
B.2019.—\**My kid* and \*\**Kashmiri* (both played by the Savoy Orpheans).

#### PARLOPHONE (12in., 4s. 6d.; 10in., 2s. 6d.).

- E.5366.—\**Take me* and \*\**Dear one* (both by Vincent Lopez and his Hotel Pennsylvania Orchestra).  
E.5367.—\**The Melody that made you mine* and *When you and I were seventeen* (both waltzes, played by Vincent Lopez).  
E.5368.—\**In the shade of a sheltering tree* and *Keep smiling at trouble* (both by Vincent Rizzio and his Hotel Sylvania Orchestra).  
E.5369.—\*\**The only only one* and *Show me the way*.  
E.5370.—\**Dog on the piano* (Arcadia Peacock Orchestra) and *Too tired* (The Parlophone Syncopators).  
E.5371.—\**Adoration Waltz* and *Oriental love dreams* (Green Brothers' Novelty Band).  
E.5372.—\**Ivano* and \*\**Serena d'Amalfi* (Bohemian Orchestra).  
E.10292 (12in.).—\*\**Le plus joli rêve* and \*\**La Sérénade* (Marek Weber and his famous Orchestra).





## THE NEW-POOR PAGE

Half-Crown and Two-Shilling  
records good on both sides.



**W**EMBLEY this year is altogether prettier, brighter, and more comfortable than last season, but gramophone interest is sadly wanting. Only the Gramophone Co., Ltd., in their beautiful salon, which remains unaltered, Peter Pan Gramophones, the extraordinarily good little Pixie Grippa, and the Academy Machines are, so far as I could see, survivors from our former memories. One new exhibit only I noticed, Homochord records, and on their stall I heard the excellent piano solo I have mentioned below.

**ACO.**—The Grosvenor Orchestra is happily responsible for two lightly and clearly recorded discs, *Carmen Selection* and *May Bruges*, both admirably played. Miss Thea Phillips gives a real SOPRANO rendering of *I heard you singing*. VIOLIN SOLOS by Miss Peggy Cochrane sounded very like phono-fiddle solos when I first played them on a tin-horn and goose-neck machine, but when later their music was put through a paper horn the violin tone was unmistakably clean and pure—*Sirventese*. Maurice Cole has a particularly nice PIANOFORTE rendering of Greig's *Norwegian Bridal Procession*. The recording is light, but very free from sostenuto effect.

**BELTONA.**—Of these I should put the MILITARY BAND numbers first in order of excellence; *Cavalry of the Clouds* is one of a particularly fine pair of marches, and *Cinderella's Bridal Procession* (Dicker) is light and pretty. The recording is not too hard. VIOLIN: *Berceuse* (Järnfeldt). SOPRANO: *I know a lovely garden*. SCOTS SONG: *Ae fond kiss*, sung by Elliot Dobie, bass, and perfectly recorded. As a rule I do not like Scots songs, the accompaniments usually annoy me unspeakably, but I like *everything* about this record. ORCHESTRAL: Two fine Strauss waltzes, *Artist's Life* and *Roses from the South*: better to listen to than to dance to. An exceedingly pretty combination of instruments called THE PALM BEACH MARIMBA BAND (I can hear nothing like a marimba in the music) play two popular numbers in a manner that will delight all young people—*By the Mississippi*. DANCE: *Why couldn't it be* and *Tell her in the Springtime*.

**HOMOCHORD.**—A splendid little 10in. PIANOFORTE record, Chaminade's *Arlequin*, played by Gertrude Miller.

**IMPERIAL.**—For our readers in the north I pick out two remarkably good BRASS BAND (St. Hilda) records, *Narcissus* and *Faust Overture*.

**PARLOPHONE.**—ORCHESTRAL: Edith Lorand has a charming little record of *Farewell my love* from *Frasquita*. The Bohemian Orchestra plays *Tails up* from *Katja* and *Invano Serenade*. Now that Vincent Lopez has demonstrated to London his incomparable quality in rendering jazz music everyone is asking for his records (most perfectly produced they are) and fortunately there are three this month—*Nola*, *Take me*, and *The Melody*.

**REGAL.**—A particularly pure and sweet-toned BRASS BAND (St. Hilda) record, *Pierrot and Pierrette*. W. Thomas's TENOR voice suits the Regal recording particularly well, the *mezza-voce* characteristic comes out truly and the articulation is perfect, *Sometimes in my Dreams*. Every kiddie loves the TRIO NUOVO, *What'll you have*. Some really original writing in the DANCE number, *I'll take her back*.

**WINNER.**—An excellent list this month. The clear-voiced Fred Granger sings *Leave a lot of time for Love*. A very good MALE VOICE QUARTETTE record, *In this hour of Softened Splendour*. WALTZ: *Haunting Melody*.

**ZONO.**—Browning Mummery, TENOR, sings the popular song *Your Smile* very prettily. Max Darewski has a popular PIANOFORTE SOLO in *Wanda*. Horwich R.M.I. play an uncommon *Hungarian Rhapsody* particularly well. DANCE: On the Z-R-3 is original.

\* \* \*

From the foregoing probably the following stand out as those best worth acquiring:—

PIANOFORTE ..	<i>Arlequin</i> .. .. .	HOMO.
VIOLIN ..	<i>Sirventese</i> .. .. .	ACO.
SOPRANO ..	<i>I heard you singing</i> .. ..	ACO.
ORCHESTRAL ..	<i>Invano</i> .. .. .	PARLO.
	<i>Artist's Life</i> (Strauss waltz) ..	BELTONA.
POPULAR SONG	<i>Leave a lot of time for Love</i> ..	WINNER.
TENOR ..	<i>Sometimes in my Dreams</i> ..	REGAL.
BASS ..	<i>Ae Fond Kiss</i> .. .. .	BELTONA.
MARCH ..	<i>Cavalry of the Clouds</i> .. ..	BELTONA.
MILITARY BAND	<i>Hungarian Rhapsody</i> .. ..	ZONO.
DANCE ..	<i>Take Me</i> .. .. .	PARLO.

\* \* \*

### Scènes Pittoresques.

This is a little suite I particularly love. I know nothing that serves to show the various instrumental characteristics so prettily contrasted and generally to such advantage. I first heard it in what still remains the best of the Imperial Company's military band records, and now the Parlophone Co. have produced a double sided 12in. record (4s. 6d.) of it, played by the Edith Lorand Orchestra. I hope I am not prejudiced in its favour by my fondness for the music, but on playing and replaying again and again it certainly seems to me to be the most completely perfect orchestral record I ever heard.

**N.B.**—I have purposely refrained from giving catalogue information because I wish readers to get the lists containing any numbers they fancy from their dealers, and then if they do not like the pair on the record I have mentioned they may be tempted to try another record of the same series.

Everyone should remember that machines having small horns (resonators) will not respond fully to the tone of instruments having large resonators or large resonating columns of air.

H. T. B.

The best substitutes for a Gramophone Year Book are

**Gramophone Tips, 1925**

By Capt. H. T. BARNETT, M.I.E.E.

AND THE

**Index to Vol. II. of THE GRAMOPHONE**

1/- each (postage 2d.), from 58, Frith Street, London, W.1.



## PARLOPHONE, E.10280-10283.

XIII. BEETHOVEN, SYMPHONY No. 4, B FLAT MAJOR, Op. 60. *Score used, Eulenburg S.14. 3s.*

## FIRST RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 1 to page 22, bar 5 (first beat), then to page 24 (no repeat).

*Second side.*—Page 24, bar 4, to end of page 56.

## SECOND RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 57 to page 66, bar 3 (first beat).

*Second side.*—Page 66, bar 3, to page 76, bar 1.

## THIRD RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 76, bar 2, to end of page 84.

*Second side.*—Page 85. Repeat double bar on page 87 and continue to page 107, bar 8 (first beat).

## FOURTH RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 107, bar 8 (third beat), to page 132, first bar (first beat). Cut to page 132, bar 5.

*Second side.*—Page 132, bar 5, to the end.

No cuts. Repeats as stated.

## PARLOPHONE, E.10284-10287.

XIV. BEETHOVEN, SYMPHONY No. 5, Op. 67, IN C MINOR. *Score used, Eulenburg S.2. 3s.*

## FIRST RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 1 to page 14, bar 5.

*Second side.*—Page 14, bar 6, to end of page 30.

## SECOND RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 31 to page 36, bar 8 (second beat).

*Second side.*—Page 38, bar 8 (third beat), to page 45, bar 5 (first beat).

## THIRD RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 45, bar 5 (second beat), to end of page 51.

*Second side.*—Page 52 to page 69, bar 2 (first beat).

## FOURTH RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 69, bar 2 (second beat), to page 99, bar 4.

*Second side.*—Page 99, commence on bar 4 to the end.

No cuts and no repeats.

## PARLOPHONE, 101222/3/4/5/6.

XV. BEETHOVEN, SYMPHONY No. 7, IN A MAJOR, Op. 92. *Score, Eulenburg S.12. 3s. 6d.*

## FIRST RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 1 to end of page 15.

*Second side.*—Page 16 to page 47, bar 2.

## SECOND RECORD.

*First Side.*—Page 47, bar 2, to end of page 78.

*Second side.*—Page 79 to end of page 85.

## THIRD RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 86, bar 1 (second beat), to page 96, bar 7 (first beat).

*Second side.*—Page 96, bar 7, to end of page 106.

## FOURTH RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 106. Repeat double bar on page 109 on to page 132, bar 9.

*Second side.*—Page 132, bar 9, to end of page 164.

## FIFTH RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 165. Repeat double bar on page 166 and repeat double bar on page 167. Repeat double bar on page 183, ditto on page 185. Finish on page 192, bar 6.

*Second side.*—Page 194, bar 6. Repeat double bar page 193 and finish.

No cuts. Repeats as stated.

Borodin has used the theme in the Fourth Movement of this work for one of the dances in *Prince Igor* H.M.V. D.795.

## PARLOPHONE, E.10137/8/9/10/140/1/2/3/4/5.

(Chorus sung in German.)

XVI. BEETHOVEN, SYMPHONY No. 9 IN D MINOR, Op. 125. *Score, Eulenburg S.11. 6s.*

## FIRST RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 1 to page 13, bar 2.

*Second side.*—Page 13, bar 3, to page 30, bar 9.

## SECOND RECORD.

*Third side.*—Page 30, bar 10, to page 48, bar 3.

*Fourth side.*—Page 48, bar 4, to page 63, bar 4.

## THIRD RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 63, bar 5, to end of page 81.

*Second side.*—Page 82 to page 111, bar 15. Cut to page 112, bar 7. Finish page 114, bar 7 (first beat).

## FOURTH RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 117, bar 7. Repeat double bar on page 115.

Repeat double bar on page 118, then back to page 82, and finish on bar 6.

*Second side.*—Page 83 to page 112, bar 6, without repeats, then on to coda, page 124. Finish on page 126.

## FIFTH RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 127 to page 131, bar 2.

*Second side.*—Page 131, bar 3, to page 135, bar 9.

## SIXTH RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 135, bar 10, to page 147, bar 2.

*Second side.*—Page 147, bar 3, to end of page 156. Cut pages 157 to end of page 162.

## SEVENTH RECORD.

*First side.*—Commence page 163, finish page 173, bar 2.

*Second side.*—Re-commence page 165 to page 185, bar 4.

## EIGHTH RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 185, bar 5. Cut from page 204 to 212, bar 10. Re-commence bar 11 to end of page 220.

*Second side.*—Page 221 to end of page 228.

## NINTH RECORD.

*First side.*—Page 229 to end of page 260.

*Second side.*—Page 261 to end.

Cuts and repeats as stated.

## VOCALION, K.05138/41.

XVII. BEETHOVEN, STRING QUARTET IN C SHARP MINOR, Op. 131. (The London String Quartet.) *Score used, Eulenburg P.2. 1s. net.*

## FIRST RECORD. K.05138.

*First side.*—Page 1 to page 5, bar 23.

*Second side.*—From page 5, bar 24, cut to page 7, bar 7. Commence record on bar 8 to page 14, bar 3.

## SECOND RECORD. K.05139.

*First side.*—Page 14, bar 4, to page 18, bar 8.

*Second side.*—Page 18, bar 9, to end of page 21.

## THIRD RECORD. K.05140.

*First side.*—Page 22 cut from bar 1 to bar 26. Commence "Adagio ma non troppo" bar 27 to page 24. Cut from bar 6 to end of page. Re-commence page 25, bar 1. Cut from page 26, bar 11 (inclusive), to end of page 27. Re-commence page 28, bar 1, finish on bar 6.

*Second side.*—Page 28, bar 7, to page 34, bar 5. Cut to page 37, end of bar 3. Bar 4 to page 38, bar 9. Cut to page 39, bar 19. Re-commence bar 20 to page 40, finish on bar 28. Cut to bar 30 same page.

## FOURTH RECORD. K.05141.

*First side.*—Page 40, bar 31, to page 45, bar 17. Cut to page 47, bar 3.

*Second side.*—Page 47, bar 4, to the end

No repeats. Cuts as stated.

## COLUMBIA, L.1581/5.

XVIII. BEETHOVEN, STRING QUARTET IN C SHARP MINOR, Op. 131. (The Lener Quartet.) *Score used, Eulenburg P.2. 1s. net.*

## FIRST RECORD. L.1581.

*First side.*—Page 1 to page 5, bar 3.

*Second side.*—Page 5, bar 4, to page 7, bar 7.

## SECOND RECORD. L.1582.

*First side.*—Page 7, bar 8, to page 14, bar 3.

*Second side.*—Page 14, bar 4, to page 18, bar 17, first beat.

## THIRD RECORD. L.1583.

*First side.*—Page 18, bar 17, second beat to end of page 19.

*Second side.*—Page 20 to repeat double bar on page 20 to page 25, bar 8.

## FOURTH RECORD. L.1584.

*First side.*—Page 25, bar 9. Repeat double bar on page 29. Finish page 32, bar 22.

*Second side.*—Page 32, bar 23, to page 40, bar 30.

## FIFTH RECORD. L.1585.

*First side.*—Page 40, bar 31, to page 45, bar 10.

*Second side.*—Page 45, bar 11, to the end.

No cuts. Repeats as stated.



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